ZZAP!
AMIGA

MICRO ACTION

COMMODORE

CRACK!

SCORPION ENGINE
All the latest Scorpion engine game news

DEMOSCENE LEGENDS
with Judge Drokk

ZZAP! AMIGA

Sept/Oct 2023

CONTENTS

ZZAP! ED

Two Years and Counting

In he two months since my last editorial, I have been incredibly busy both at home and work, and the time has literally flown by.

However, I now lie relaxed, late at night, with the family sleeping - just me and my laptop, a candle flickering away, and time to reflect on two years in the job as editor of ZZAP! AMIGA.

Just writing that down makes me pause for a moment and wonder how I ended up in this honourable position. A combination of good timing, willingness to be involved, and lots of hard work.

In return, I have reaped many rewards. The pride in seeing (and feeling) the physical copy of the magazine I helped put together. The amazing ZZAP! AMIGA team I have built a relationship with, sharing ideas, discussing the latest games we are reviewing, not to mention learning every day from experienced writers.

Then there are those AMIGA community members who are doing amazing things in their spare time to promote the machine and allow us to have new, amazing experiences with it. Developers, organisers, journalists, hobbyists, and tech-experts.

I am going to pick on one group for my bi-annual editorial, which is Erik Hogan and the Scorpion users. Scorpion is a relatively new game engine, built by Erik, and facilitates the development of high-performing, quality games using modern tools, without knowing a line of assembler.

These last few issues, we have dedicated a regular feature on this subject, with Erik himself providing updates, and developers giving insightful information on how they are using the tool in their current projects. We also have an increasing number of games being reviewed that have been produced using the engine, most notably: *Green Beret*, *Duckstroma*, *Boxx 4*, and *Rick Dangerous Enhanced*.

But what has really amazed me on this journey is the welcome and helpfulness that Erik himself, and the community of developers, have provided me. I have become a member on Discord, and joined the Scorpion projects discussions over there,

which are both extremely exciting and insightful.

I have never met Erik in person, but he never seems to be rushed or stressed and always has time for questions, or to write his piece for the Scorpion 'Segment' in ZZAP!

Then there is Mixel, a developer, currently working on multiple projects, including the eagerly anticipated *Creeping Me Out: Hex Night*. We have published part 3 of his diary notes on game development, and each installment has been an education, and hopefully an inspiration for some of you to have a go at developing your own game.

There are countless others, but those who have touched my heartstrings recently, with their incredible talent and contribution include acidbottle (*Wonderboy*), Mohammed Malik (*Street Fighter*), UltraNarwhal (*Duckstroma*), and Dante Mendez (*Green Beret*).

Just scrolling the newsfeed on Discord has me brimming with excitement with what is in the pipeline from Scorpion, let alone all the other game developers out there!

So, as I raise a glass to the last two years, I look forward to the next two, and sharing all the exciting AMIGA-related pleasure our wonderful communities can muster!

Viva la AMIGA!

You really need to know who to blame! Here is our panel of games reviewers – all kids (at heart)

An avid fan of both the Amstrad CPC and the AMIGA, **CHRIS THACKER** has always believed both machines never reached their full potential in their generations. A guest writer for Crash's 100th Issue as well as features for Popular Retro, The Story of the Commodore AMIGA in Pixels and others, Chris also operates ThatRetroVideoGamer.com website and YouTube channel and is often found in many an gaming expo hunting down obscure and upcoming retro and indie titles.

MARK MACRAE was hooked on computer games ever since playing Summer Games on the C64 at a friend's 9th Birthday party. This led to him owning his own C64 and, later, an AMIGA. A keen follower of many retro groups and channels, and admin of the Lemon64 Games Competition, Mark is over the moon to be writing for ZZAP! AMIGA after being an avid reader of ZZAP! 64 since the early issues. He enjoys tinkering with hardware mods and emulation and his favourite AMIGA games are Sensible World of Soccer, IK+ and Defender of the Crown.

ANDREW FISHER honed his gaming skills on the C64 in the 1980s, playing AMIGA at friends' houses and in computer shops. After writing for Commodore Force and Commodore Format in the 1990s, he became a regular contributor to Retro Gamer magazine — adding multiple AMIGAs (and hundreds of 3.5" disks) to his collection. A big pinball fan, he has also contributed to several retro gaming books including The Story Of The Commodore AMIGA In Pixels, and is also found in the pages of the revived ZZAP! 64.

Hopping across the corridor from ZZAP! 64, **PAUL MORRISON** is a lover of all things Commodore. Despite never owning an AMIGA back in the day, Paul could often be found at his mate's house, playing first on his A500 then his A1200 (which Paul himself now owns). Their combined skills on Silkworm were legendary, but despite growing up in the arcades his favourite AMIGA games are mostly RPGs, although his love for Rocket Ranger eclipses everything else. A gamer for over forty years, his trusty Zipstik is never too far away – you can never be too prepared!

ZZAP! Flash

...with David "Jazzcat" Simmons, Hot data for vintage hardware!

THE LAST DUNGEON

Thanks to the AmiGameJam 2022, we have been overwhelmed with new material for our beloved machines. One of these entries was *The Last Dungeon*, a dungeon crawler (you don't say) in the style of *The Legend Of Zelda* on the NES. Other influences for its creation were *Atic Atac* on the Spectrum and *Labyrinth*

On the BBC Micro.

As an adventurer, you have nearly reached the end of your quest, and all that stands in your way is the titular "Last Dungeon". Choose to play as a Barbarian or a Wizard, or team up together for co-op play (each character type plays differently mechanically).

PixelPlop is developing the game, and has spent around three months making the AmiGameJam entry. Many game features are incomplete; these will eventually find their way into future updates. We pestered the developer on an ETA, but there is no release date planned (ready when ready).
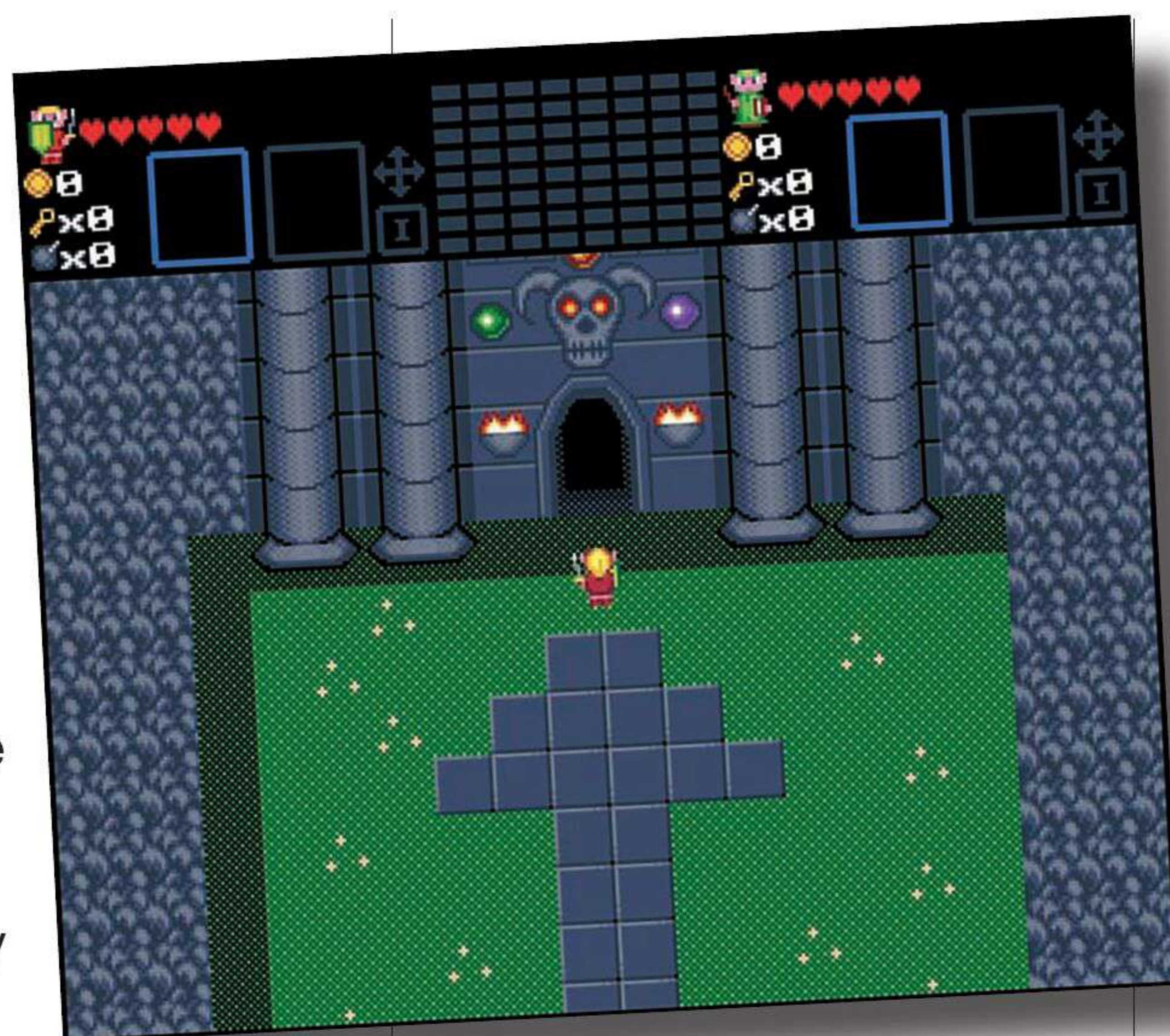
The Last Dungeon is written in C++ using PixelPlop's internal cross-platform Amiga/PC game library. It is made to run on OCS/ECS/AGA PAL Amigas with 1Mb+ memory (512Kb+ chipram), and is also compatible with the A500 Mini. **https://pixelplop.itch.io**

King Arthur - Rise of the Round Table

Rise of the Round Table is an Action RPG inspired by *Moonstone*. As the name alludes to, the story centres around the Arthurian legend, and so will probably be every bit as violent as *Moonstone*. As the player progresses, they will be able to acquire not just different weapons, but also additional moves and combos with which to do battle. Learning when to use which weapon, and which technique, will be key to victory.

The current demo needs an expanded CD32 with an 030 and fast RAM, though the final game should work on a stock CD32 or any AGA Amiga with a CD-ROM drive. That said, there will be a few modest enhancements for any system with additional RAM.

LateBit is targeting summer 2024 for the final game, but that's just a goal at this point. Natalie Fretwell (programming) and Richard Fretwell (graphics) have told ZZAP! AMIGA that there is no intention to release *Rise of the Round Table* until they think it's as good as they can make it.

Ooze: The Escape

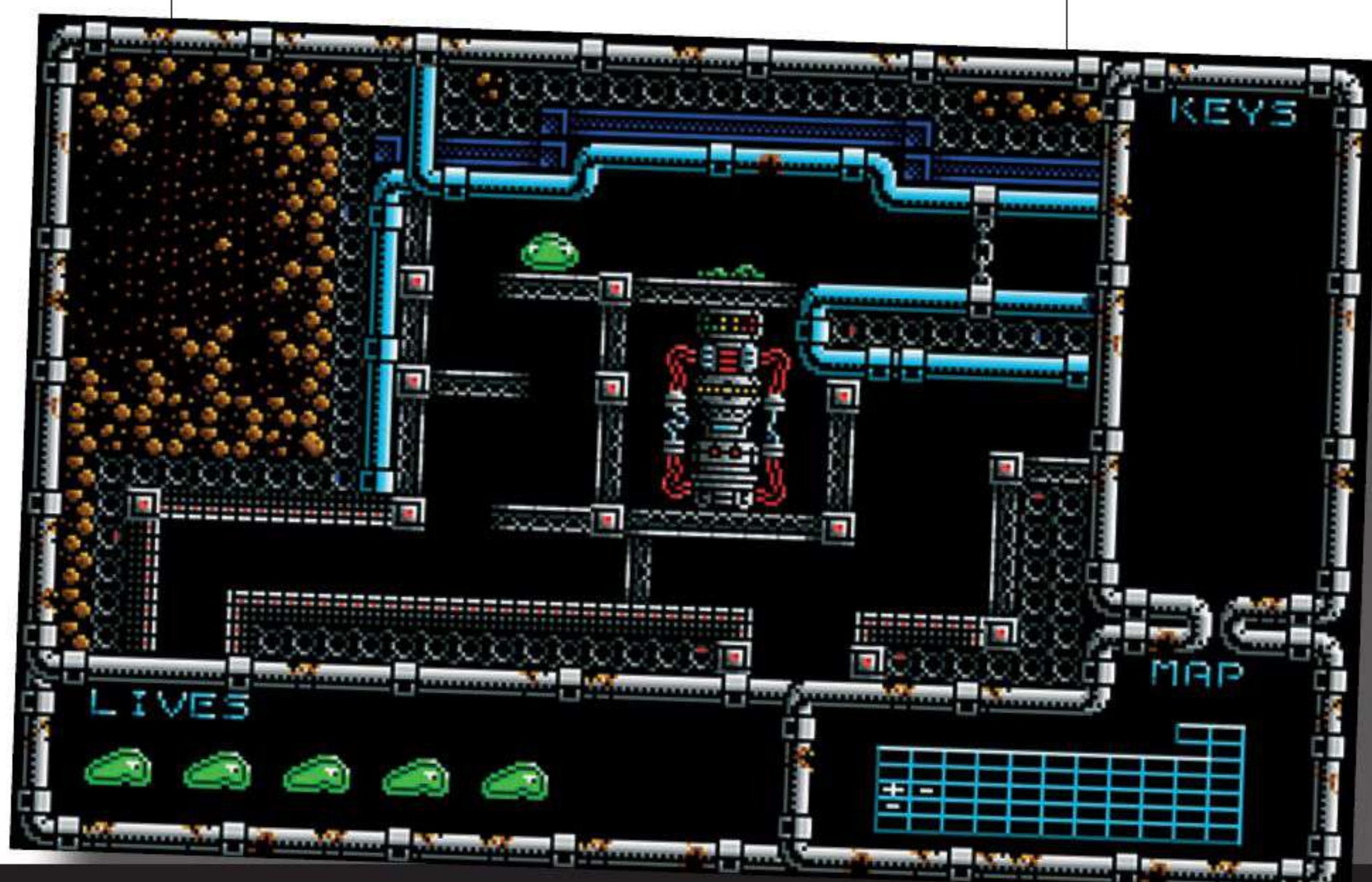**T**he aim of *Ooze: The Escape* is to escape from a dangerous subterranean complex by navigating through various corridors and laboratories using its gravity-reversing powers to collect keys and disable force fields to open access to further areas.

Australian developer Haplo provides an update on the game status: "*Ooze: The Escape* was originally developed by Andy Johns and released on ZX Spectrum in 2017. Andy and I worked together to port it to C64, which was released in May 2023. We are currently porting it to Amiga. The C64 version was already vastly enhanced compared to the ZX Spectrum, and the Amiga version will be adding even more enhancements, such as a much bigger map (almost double the size), new enemies and hazards, improved graphics, sprites, animations and sound effects. There was a lot of stuff we couldn't do on C64 due to the platform limitations which we have been able to include in the Amiga port."

If all goes well, the game will have been released at the end of August! (Ed: indeed it has, so look out for a review in issue 13!)

ZZAP! Flash

APOLLO INVADERS

STATUS UPDATE:

ZONE 5 ACTIVE

PRESIDENT Ronald Reagan
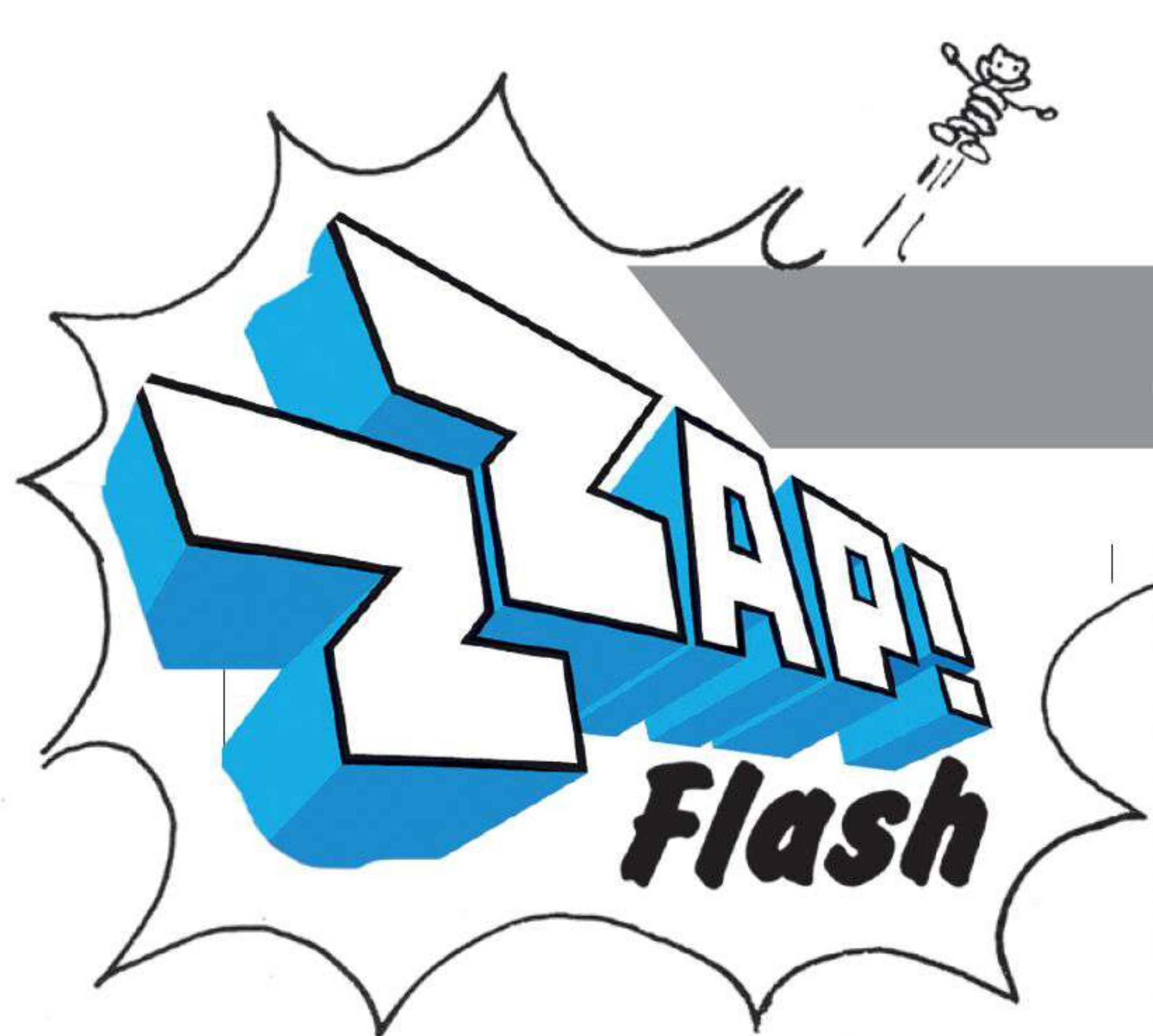
Multiple swarm UFOs have been detected hovering over the Turkey, Israel and Egypt. The presence of these unidentified aerial objects requires urgent attention and heightened security measures in the affected regions.

Apollo Invaders draws its inspiration from the iconic 1978 arcade game. Proudly presented by Apollo Games, this enhanced edition is compatible with both V2 and V4 Apollo Systems, offering a thrilling four-player cooperative experience for endless fun with your friends.

Featuring 16-bit audio, precisely positioned audio effects, and high-definition, fluid graphics, it's just one of the many exceptional games available on this platform. With over 101 diverse battle locations to explore, your mission is to eliminate all alien and UFO sightings worldwide. The game is divided into ten distinct zones, and upon successfully clearing each zone, you'll earn a prestigious medal. Upon conquering all levels and defeating the mothership, you'll claim the ultimate medal.

Armed with an array of weapons, you can collect

OPTIONS

Please choose difficulty level

EASY

HERO

unique weapon systems and protective shields by successfully shooting down UFOs. The game offers two difficulty modes, allowing you to enjoy a casual and easy playthrough with friends or challenge yourself with the heroic 'hard' mode.

Featuring more than 100 high-resolution, true-colour sprites and mesmerizing alpha blending effects, Apollo Invaders promises an immersive gaming experience like no other.

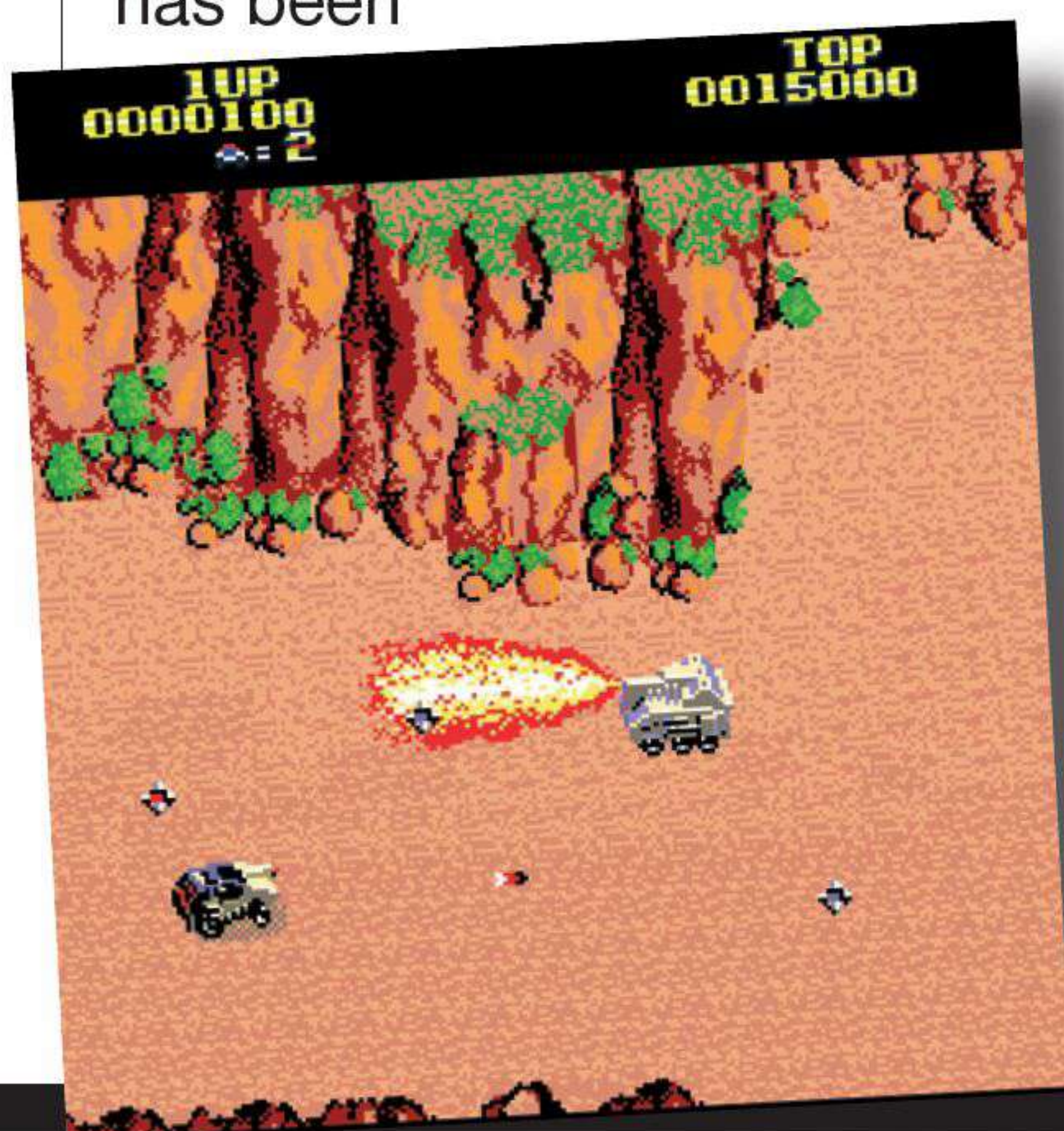Apollo Invaders is expected to be unleashed on the Amiga towards the end of 2023.

APOLLO INVADERS
TEAM EARTH
SCORE
000000
AIR SUPPORT
01
LIVES
04
LEVEL
000
HIGHSCORE
004000
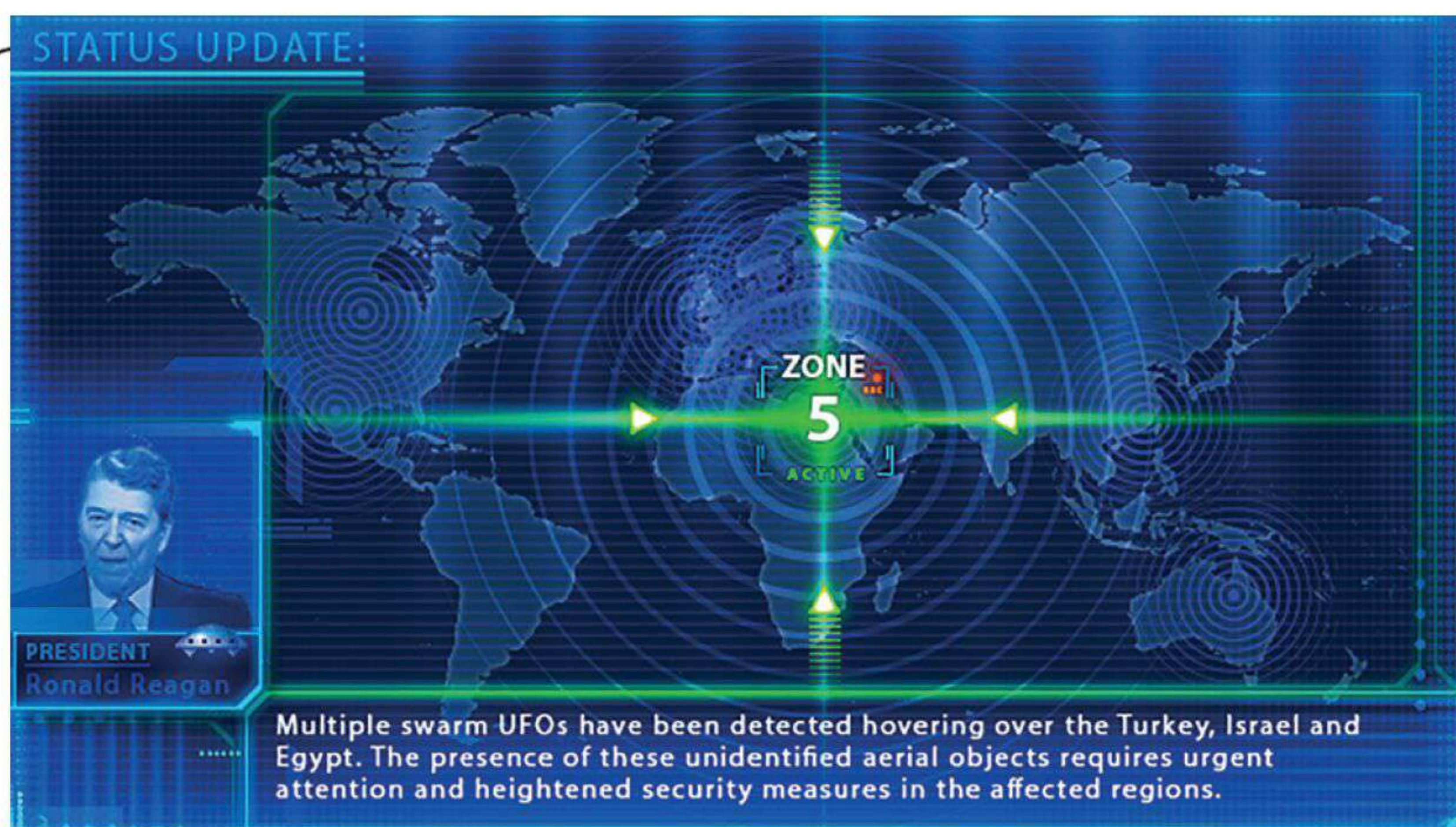
Breakthru

Breakthru is an arcade game from DataEast, released way back in 1986. While often overlooked and forgotten about, it was ported to a number of 8-bit computers, and NES also had a version.

It is a side-scrolling shoot-em-up, with the aim being to re-capture a stolen military aircraft using your futuristic assault vehicle. It features five fairly short but varied levels of hardcore blasting and jumping action. Along the way, you can briefly power up your vehicle with more firepower, as you out-fight various soldiers and tanks to recover the aircraft.

Acidbottle is developing *Breakthru,* among other titles such as *Depthcharge*, *Tiger Heli,* and *Wonderboy III*. He kindly provided an update on the development status: "I started the project around February 2023, and initial progress has been good. Getting the game engine to function, for such a simple game, was not as easy as it looked. The Scorpion Engine is perhaps better known for platform-style games, and very few raw shooters have been attempted. Nevertheless, at the time of writing, the core engine is close to complete, and some fine-tuning is still to do there. All five levels are implemented, and aside from a missile enemy type and some kamikaze jeeps, all sprites are in place. JMD has once again been indispensable for the music score."

Breakthru will run on OCS/ECS and, of course, AGA AMIGA, but memory requirements are yet to be finalised. Acidbottle is targeting the end of the year as a release date but tells us that the release may spill into early 2024.

ZZAP! Flash
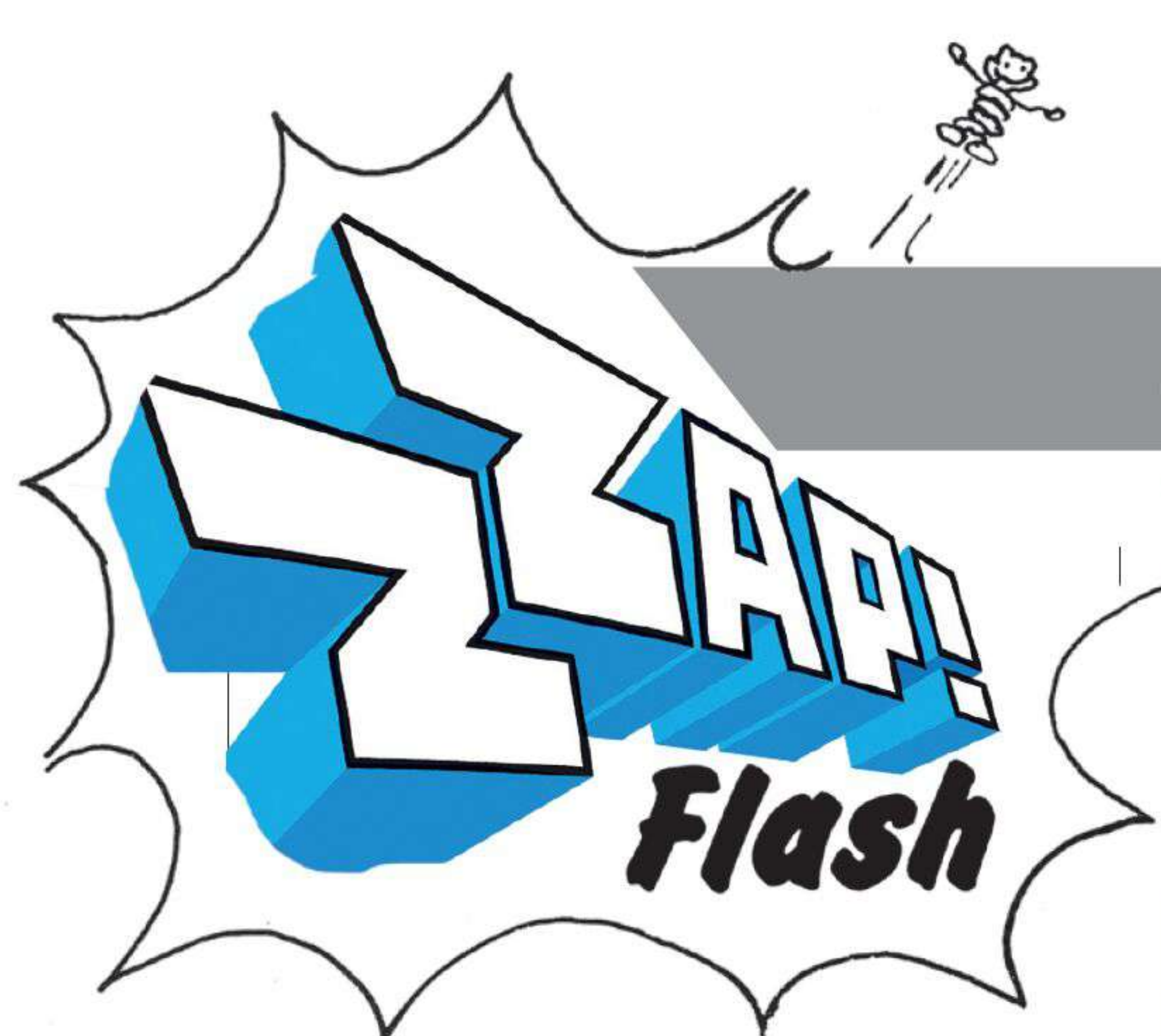
Krogharr

Monsters have stolen the village's beer, so its mightiest warrior, KROGHARR, has to go out, kill the monsters, and bring back the beer.

Developed by Michael Bormann (aka Tigerskunk), *Krogharr* is loosely based on one of his childhood favourite games on the Sega Master System, namely *Black Belt* (but with barbarians and beer).

You'll be running around four beautiful and diverse, parallax-scrolling levels (50fps), hacking enemies, evading traps and other dangers, and killing end-level bosses.

You will also find yourself collecting flying beer for BEERSERK mode, pork chops for health, and other stuff around the level (Ed: sounds like an evening down the local!).

BEERSERK mode gives you the strength to brutally kill enemies, resulting in some ridiculously violent stuff (such as decapitation galore).

Krogharr will be released shortly before Christmas 2023 as a downloadable ADF on tigerskunk.itch.io for around 12 Euros.
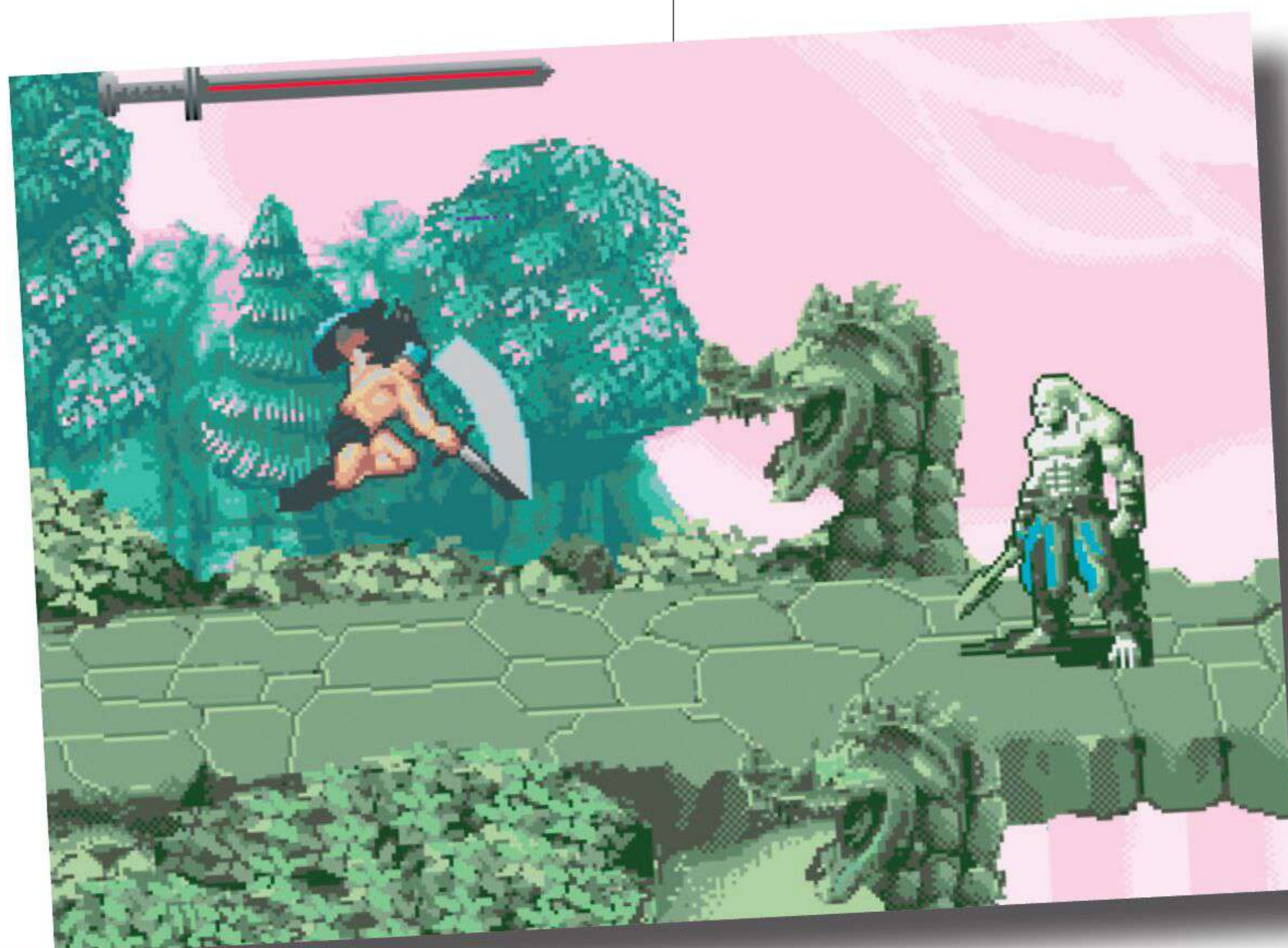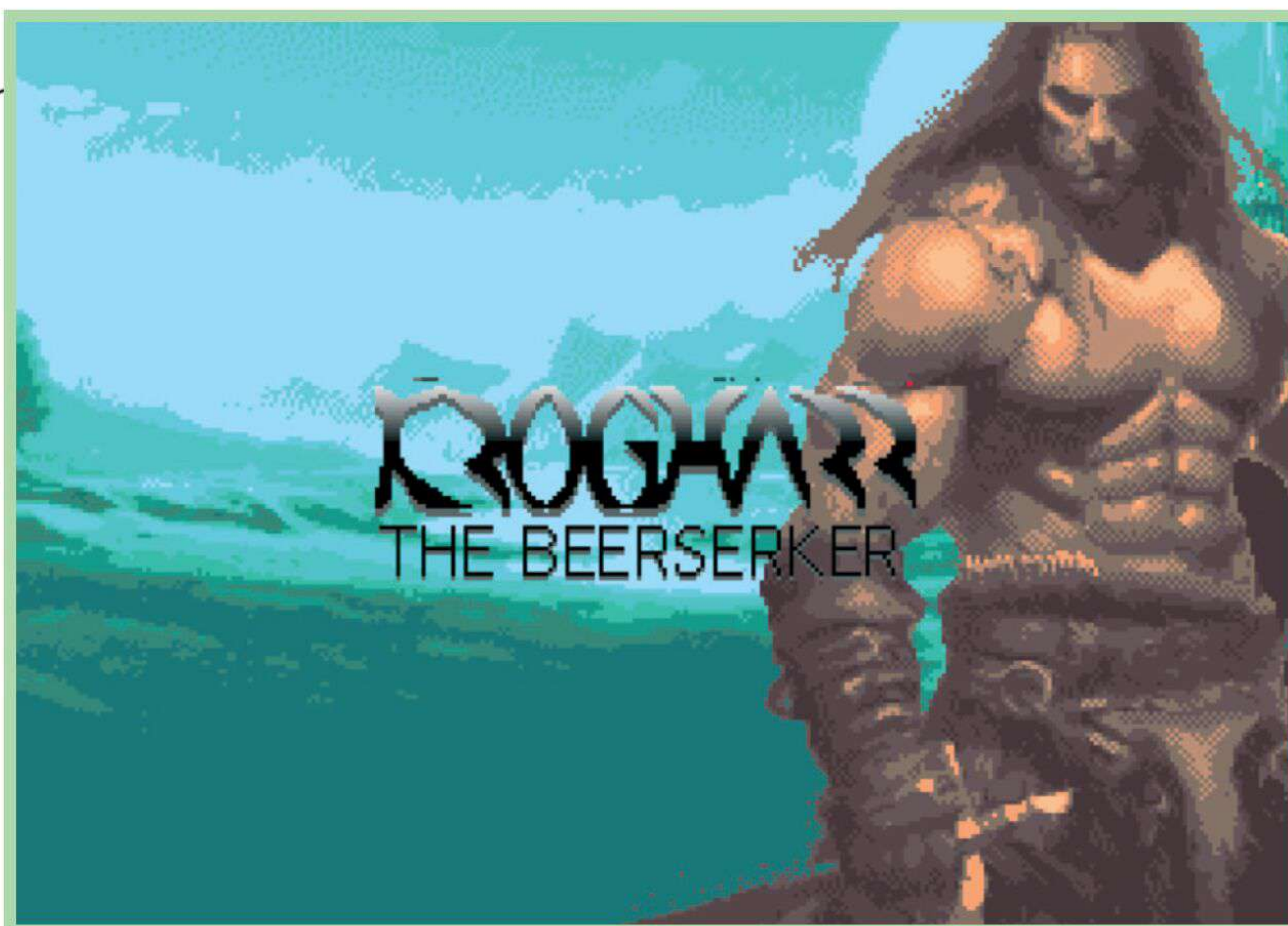
Covermount

We have an exclusive demo of CastleVania AGA from Dante Mendez. This contains a brand new World 4 (comprising stages 10, 11 and 12), as well as all the other levels previously available. There is also a cool new boss, never seen before!

ZZAP! AMIGA · 12 MONTHS OUT!

Release dates subject to change (estimations sourced from the developers where possible!)

Tony - Born for adventure

A monochrome platformer set across 6 levels: Jungle, Swamp, Catacombs, Aztec Pyramid, Montezuma's Castle, and Hell.
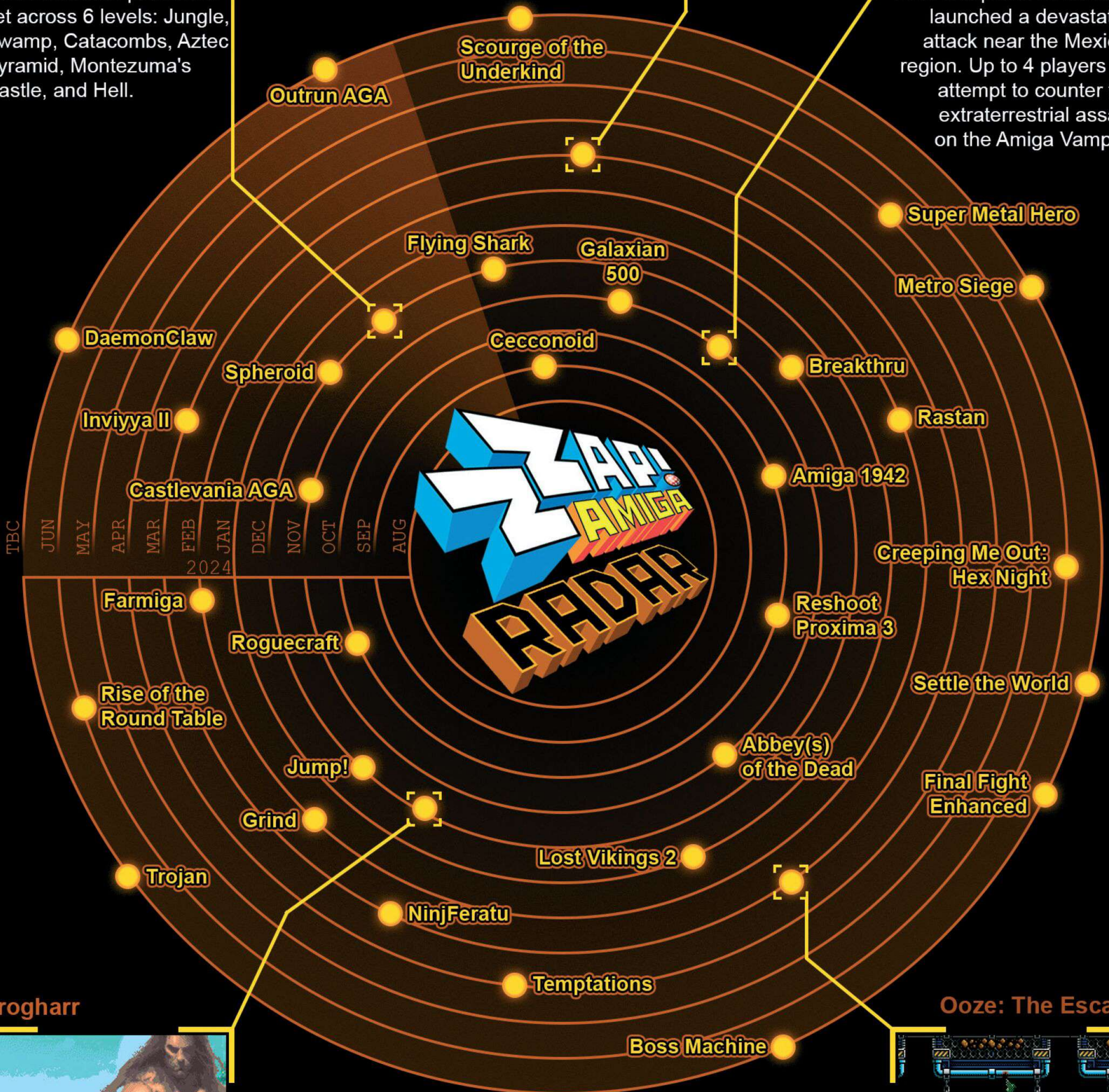
Geezer Games

A Hyper Sports and Track and Field clone for the AGA featuring: Swimming, Skeet, Boxing, Archery, Pole Vault, Hurdles, Javelin, Triple Jump, and Weightlifting.
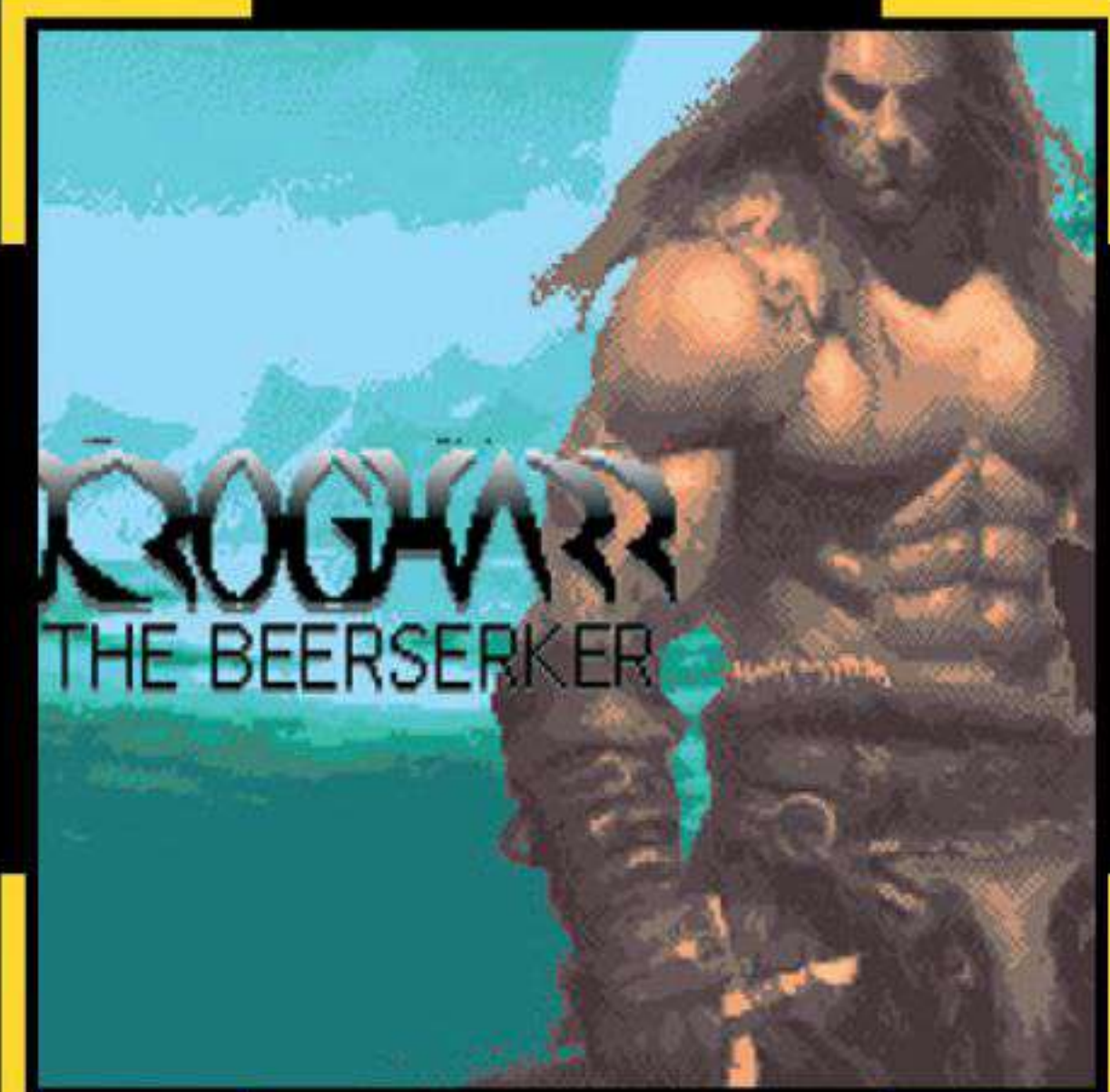
Apollo Invaders

90% complete. UFOs have launched a devastating attack near the Mexican region. Up to 4 players will attempt to counter this extraterrestrial assault on the Amiga Vampire.

ZZAP! AMIGA RADAR

TBC · JUN · MAY · APR · MAR · FEB · JAN · DEC · NOV · OCT · SEP · AUG

2024

Scourge of the Underkind

Outrun AGA

Flying Shark

Galaxian 500

Super Metal Hero

Metro Siege

DaemonClaw

Spheroid

Cecconoid

Breakthru

Inviyya II

Rastan

Castlevania AGA

Amiga 1942

Farmiga

Creeping Me Out: Hex Night

Roguecraft

Reshoot Proxima 3

Settle the World

Rise of the Round Table

Abbey(s) of the Dead

Jump!

Final Fight Enhanced

Grind

Lost Vikings 2

Trojan

NinjFeratu

Temptations

Boss Machine

Krogharr

Krogharr loves beer, and he also enjoys splitting his enemies' skulls...

Tigerskunk is giftwrapping this for Christmas for the OCS with 512k/512k and upwards.

Ooze: The Escape

Escape from a dangerous subterranean complex by navigating through corridors and laboratories using gravity-reversing powers to collect keys and disable force fields.

Get the game here

Absolute Zero
GUS Entertainment — 2023 (£free to download)

Young Corben is a courageous explorer who will need all that courage for his latest quest. Some force has switched off the climate reactors. They need new Power Cells to be turned back on before the world is plunged into a new ice age! Professor Punset is on hand to advise how Corben can use his special equipment to complete his mission. Corben can jump, but not very high. To climb higher, he can create or remove ice blocks in front of him by pressing Button 1; pressing Down will create or remove ice blocks under his feet. Ice blocks can also be headbutted from below to break them, and most creatures will destroy any ice block they run into. Corben can also find energy shots, which must be charged and then released to kill an enemy. On each level, the status panel shows how many shots Corben has available, and how many Cells are needed for that level's reactor. Getting hit by enemies or walking into fire will reduce Corben's shield, and if it is depleted, his emergency teleport will send him back to the start of the current level to try again. Certain stages require to use flashlight to illuminate a small area around himself. And if Corben's quest is Corben his interrupted, he can continue his game at the later levels by selecting them from the title screen. Good luck, Corben!!

I love the idea behind this AGA game, harking back to the classic Solomon's Key with its block-placing gameplay - plus the appropriate environmental message. I initially struggled to get it running in emulation, resulting in everything turning green! When I did manage to play, I liked how the new ideas were gradually introduced (with speech bubbles) and level layouts became more complex. It has a cute overall look and some decent sound work. I appreciate the ability to resume your game at later levels – but that has the effect of reducing the long-term appeal. For a party competition entry, this is polished, if lacking a little depth.

-=Punset=-
Press Down to create or destroy ice
blocks under your feet.

SHOTS ●●●●● GET 0 MORE CELLS

Absolute Zero is a game that deserves praise for its creativity and quality. Sure, in its heart it's an evolution of Solomon's Key, but it is a rare gem that showcases the potential of the Commodore Amiga as a gaming platform, and the talent of the developers. The game is not without flaws, however, as some players may find it hard to control Corben with the keyboard or joystick - or to navigate through the complex mazes tackling each enemy encounter, using their abilities wisely to collect each cell needed. However issues like this are minor compared to the overall excellence of the game, and it's well worth keeping on your radar for the next adventure.

This game was created with the RedPill Game Creator. It was released at the Posadas Party in Andalusia, Spain, at the end of June - winning the Homebrew Game competition.

ABSOLUTE 0°

CONTINUE
NEW GAME
EXIT

(c) 2023 REDPILL

PRESENTATION 89%
Nice, nice baby, from the starting menu to completion, this feels cool!

GRAPHICS 85%
Attention to detail is apparent in both the sprites and the environment.

SOUND 77%
The soundtrack can start to feel repetitive, but there are reasonable SFX.

HOOKABILITY 81%
Within five minutes, we were rekindling our Arctic adventure love.

LASTABILITY 82%
There's enough content here to avoid outstaying its welcome - with just enough levels to give you a challenge.

OVERALL 82%
It won't keep you frozen to your Amiga, but this is an enjoyable puzzle platformer.

CHEETAH CHARACTER STICKS

Welcome to ZZAP! Amiga-Tech, your bi-monthly look at the world of Amiga hardware old and new. A bit of fun this time as I look back at some of the more quirky joysticks on offer for our beloved system. I am, of course, talking about the Cheetah Character sticks.

As owners of the Commodore Amiga, you no doubt enjoyed a good waggle of your joystick. There was a vast array to choose from, but the likelihood is that at some point or other, you'll have owned a Cheetah, a word that back in the day was synonymous with the word 'Joystick'.

You may remember such classics as the Cheetah Annihilator or The Exterminator, or even the immensely popular 125+, which was a stalwart of Joystick world. As time moved on we saw the introduction of some of the more 'deluxe' models, the Cheetah Mach 1 and the Cheetah Star Probe, with their highly responsive and clicky microswitches. And let's not forget the tiny but rather genius Cheetah 'Bug', a handheld masterpiece that came in either gloss black or slime green and was a firm favourite among Amiga users everywhere.

All was good and well, but as we moved into the 1990s with an ever-growing competitive joystick and peripheral market, Cheetah needed something new to add to their already extensive and popular line. Jump to 1992, and Cheetah announced just that, a new line of five 'Character Sticks', all of which took inspiration from the world of movies and television. The set included two Batman-inspired joysticks: one from the latest Tim Burton blockbuster, Batman Returns, and the other from the hit Batman animated series that I remember watching fondly on Saturday mornings. The third and fourth sticks were both movie tie-ins, the first a terminator exoskeleton skull from Arnie's big action blockbuster Terminator 2 – Judgement Day, and the second the most grotesque of the lot, the Alien from sci-fi blockbuster Alien 3. The fifth and final stick was of rebellious schoolboy scamp Bart Simpson of The Simpsons TV fame.

Now, these weren't just any old TV and movie-themed sticks covered in stickers and logos pertaining to the above. What you got was a beautifully moulded and coloured handle based on the character you had chosen
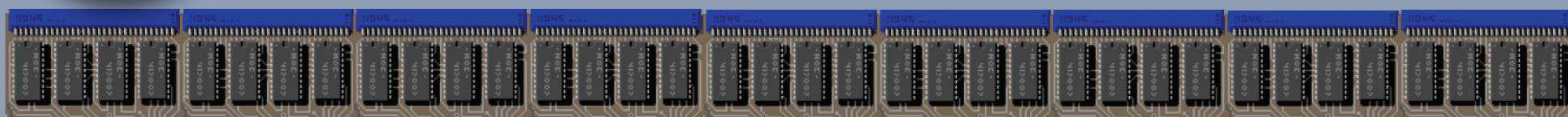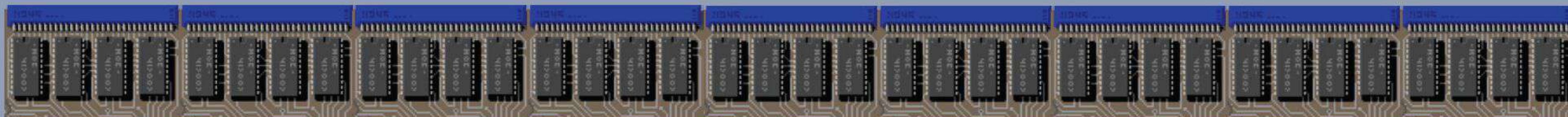
Combine this with some rather stylish box art relating to each character and a see-through window on the front for you to drool through, and what Cheetah had produced was a gorgeous 'I want one of those now' kind of products.

BATMAN RETURNS

Na-na na-na na-na na-na! Batman! Inspired by the second Tim Burton and Michael Keaton blockbuster movie, Batman Returns is the first of our character sticks and features a very slim full body mould of the caped crusader himself. The stick is completely black in colour, bar a touch of yellow for the base fire button, utility belt, and iconic chest emblem. The box art is fantastic, with two different comic book-style pictures of Batman on either side and another on the inner box of Batman smashing into the foreground with his fist. Personally, he's my favourite superhero, and I was obsessed with the Tim Burton movies as a kid, and quite

frankly, I still am. But alas! The stick is uncomfortable and feels completely wrong in your hand in every way. Combine that with an awkwardly placed front trigger fire button located on Bats' folded arms, and all I can say is "Holy bad design, Batman"!

BATMAN ANIMATED

Na-na na-na! Okay, okay, you get the point! Second in the series of our character sticks sees yet another outing for old Bats, but this time in the guise of his popular 1990s animated series. The most surprising thing about this stick is the mould itself which isn't just a repainted replica of the Batman Returns mould, which one may expect. Although very similar, it is different in that it's not as slim and features slightly broader shoulders and a buffed-out chest. The mould has been well painted as well and captures the look of the animated series character perfectly.

The box art, once again, is fantastic! With animated Batman standing proud either side of the box and on the inner, a rather stylishly drawn backdrop of Gotham City. Broader shoulders and a buffed-out moulded chest may not sound like much but actually it makes all the difference here, and com-

Above: An advert for the character sticks from Amiga Format.

bine this with an ever-so-slightly better feeling trigger fire button located again on the arms, and this stick feels a lot nicer to hold than that of our first Bats offering. Holy ever-so-slightly better design, Batman!

Above: One of the two button style sticks.
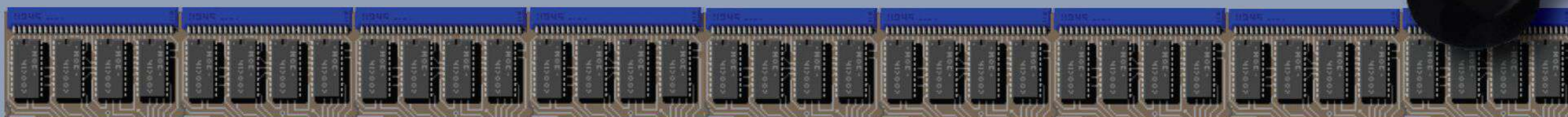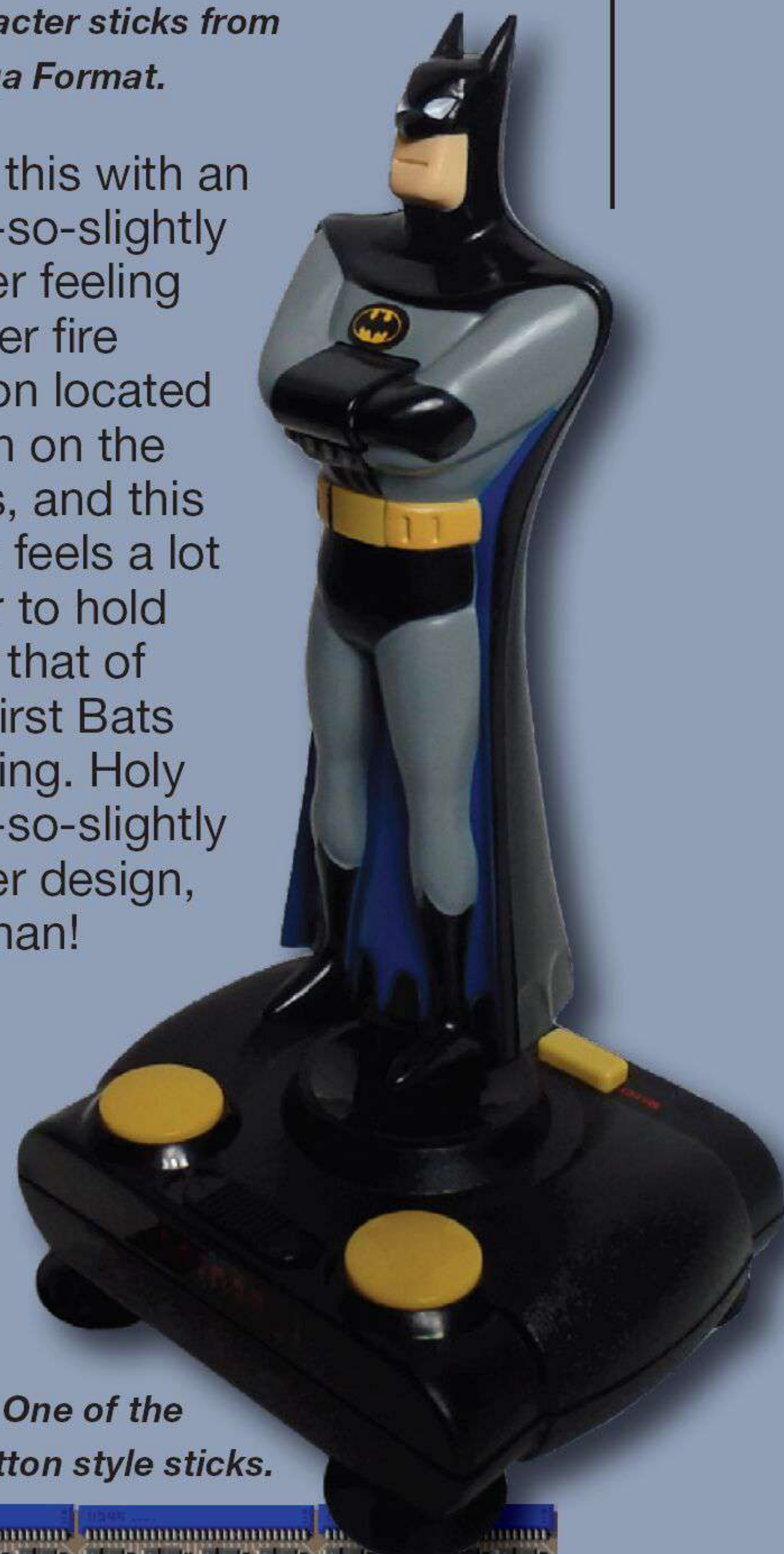
HASTA LA VISTA BABY!

Inspired by the James Cameron & Arnold Schwarzenegger blockbuster of 1991, the Terminator 2 character stick has a handle moulded in the shape of the iconic Terminator exoskeleton skull. Complete with menacing red eyes and a red fire button on the base, the rest of the joystick is completely silver, which, if you know what the exoskeleton looks like, should really come as no surprise. There is also a silver trigger fire button that sits nicely on the skull's forehead and actually looks like it is just part of the skull's design. The box art has still movie images on either side, each depicting the exoskeleton in different poses. The inner box art, again, is a movie still from the actual movie, and shows a damaged exo-skeleton lying in the rubble.

The smallest of the character sticks, and also perhaps the most cumbersome of the series as the skull is rather large and not the easiest to hold, although with a bit of fidgeting, a comfortable grip can be achieved. One for the die-hard Terminator fans only. Hasta La Vista Baby!

DO THE BARTMAN!

Next in our Character Stick series, we have the little cheeky schoolboy scamp, Bart Simpson. This stick features a very detailed mould of a young Bart in a sitting position with arms folded. Even series creator Matt Groening's signature is stamped into the mould at the base.

The base itself and the majority of the character's body is blue in colour with Bart's head, arms, and legs done in that iconic Simpsons yellow that we instantly recognise and love. Artwork-wise, this box is perhaps the most basic, with a plain white backdrop and picture of Bart standing on either side. Sadly, the inner box features no artwork at all, but the green colour used contrasts well against the blue stick and makes it stand out. Unfortunately, the stick is rather uncomfortable and awkward to hold due to Bart's eyes, ears, and pointy nose, which all protrude outwards and into your hand, the nose being particularly sharp and annoying. And despite the main thumb trigger fire button being located on top of Bart's head, I found myself pressing the nose all the time as it felt like the natural place for the button to be! Ay, Caramba!
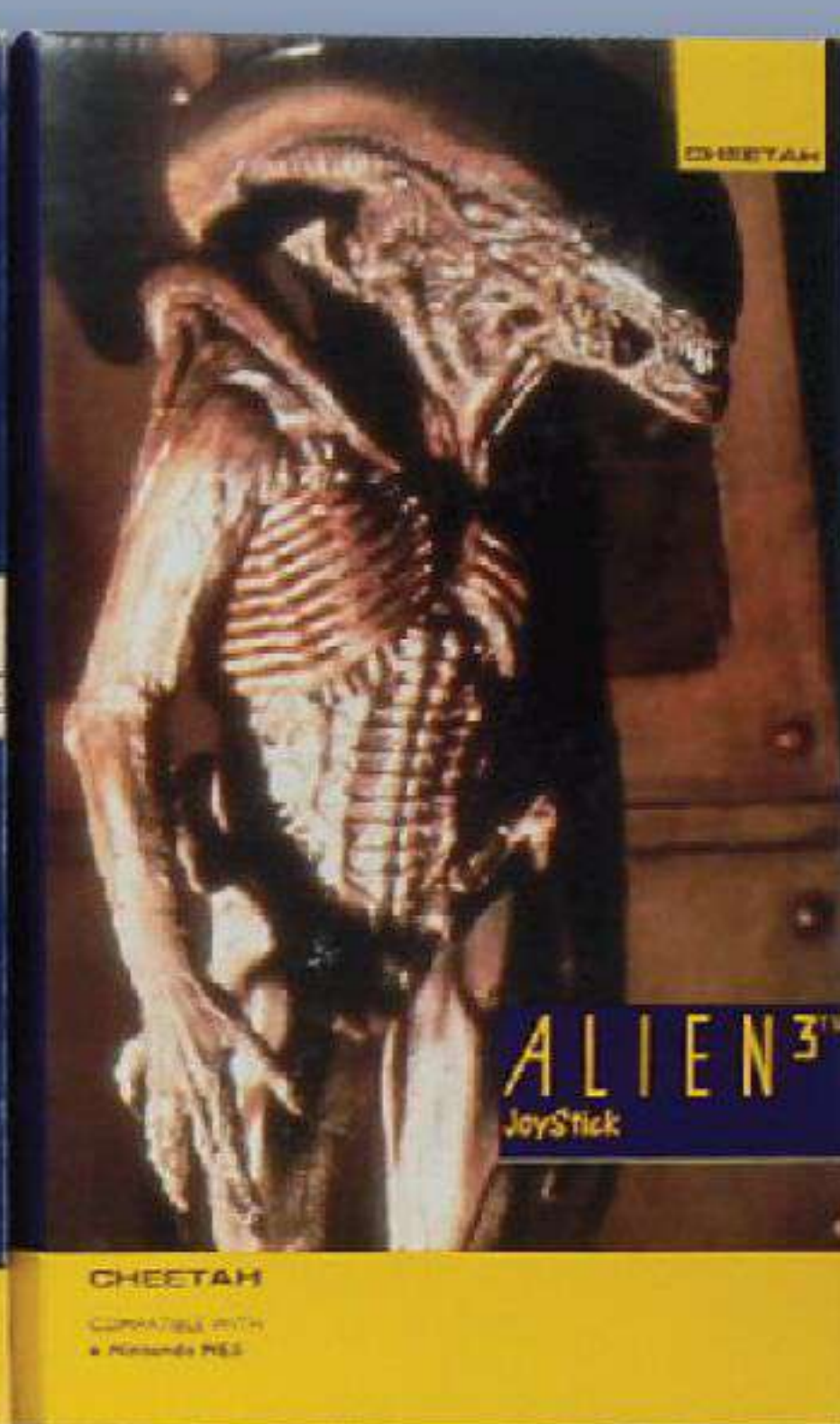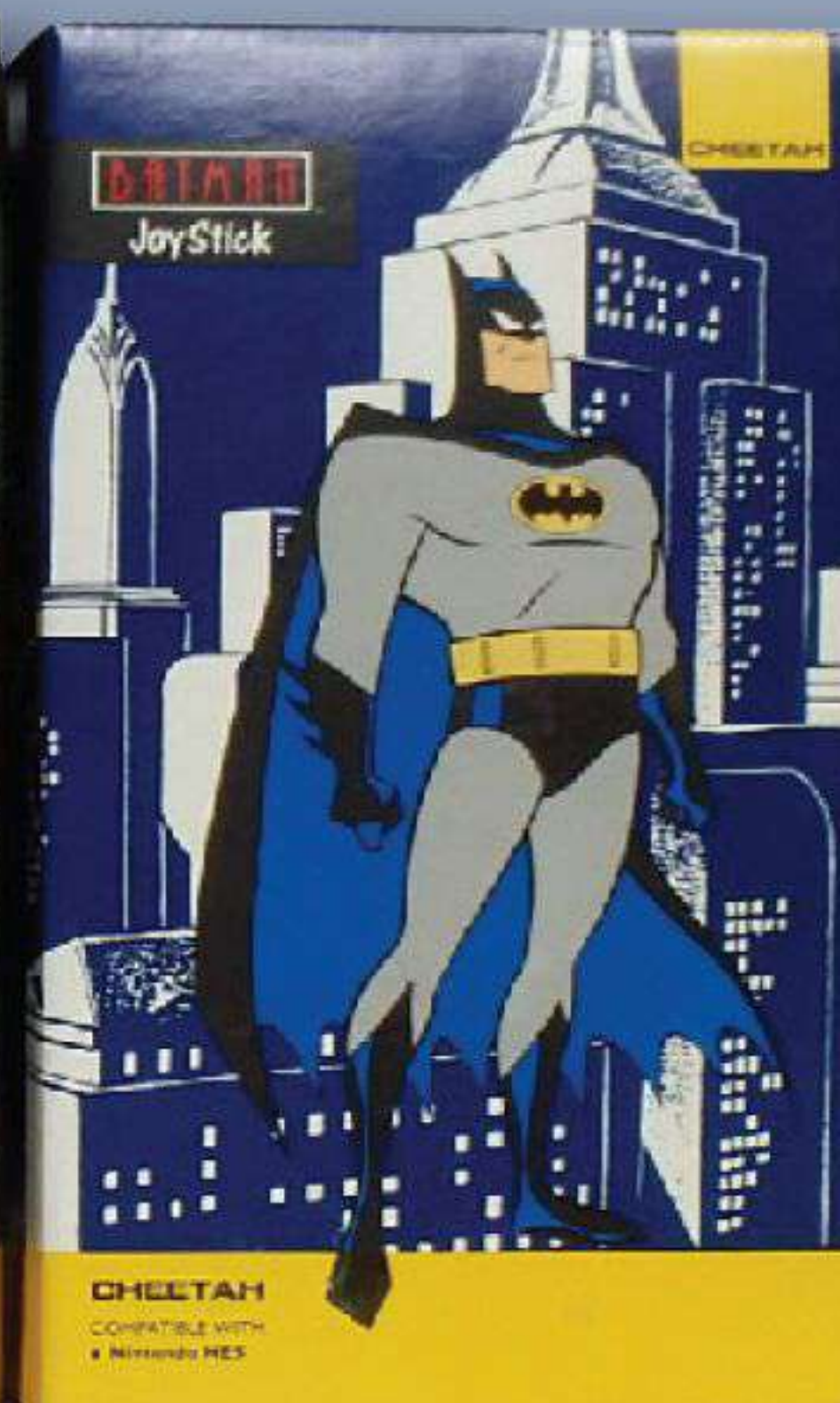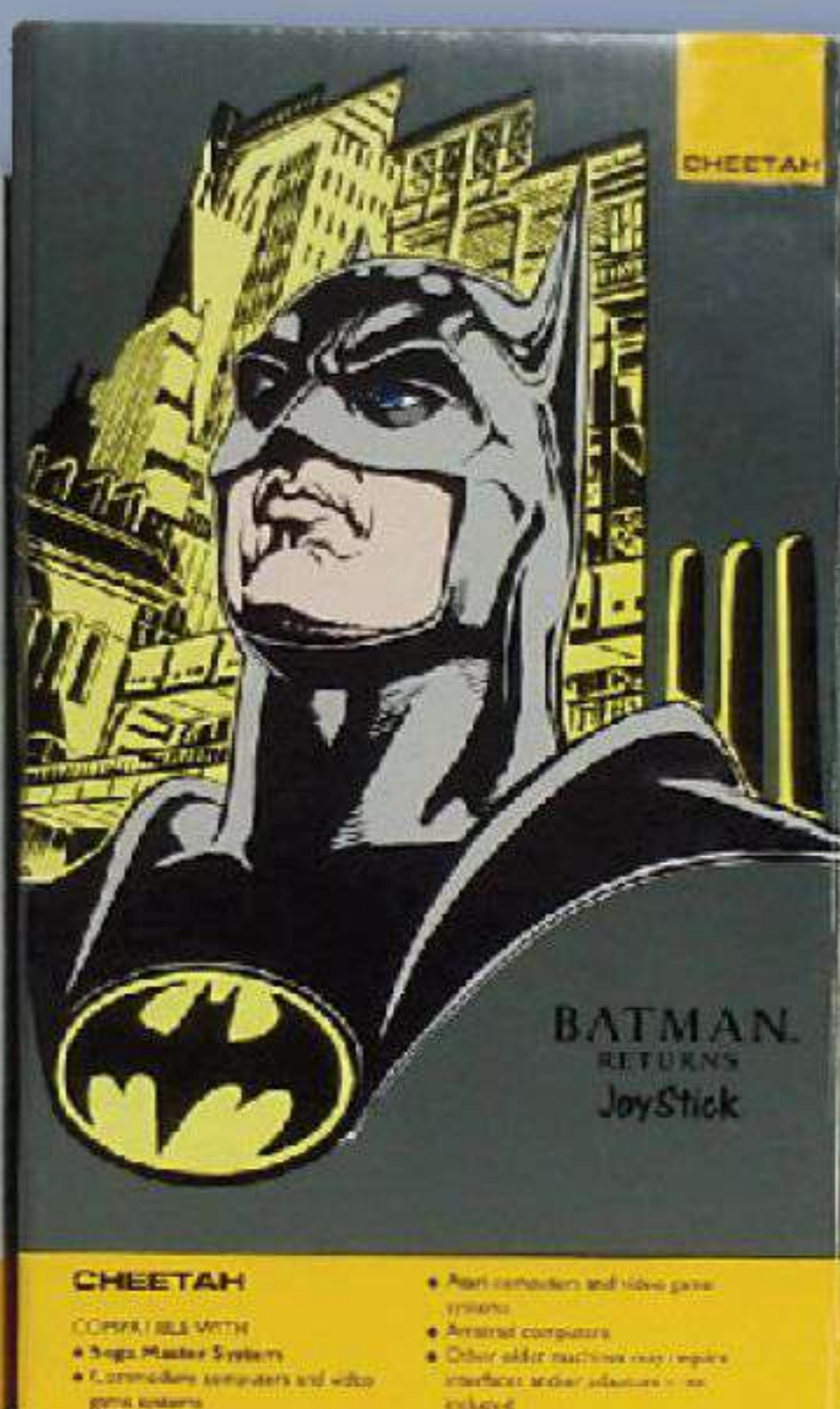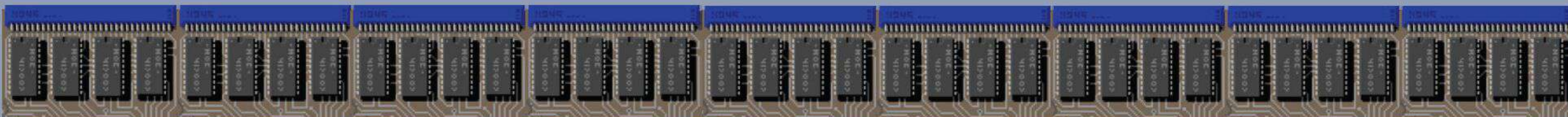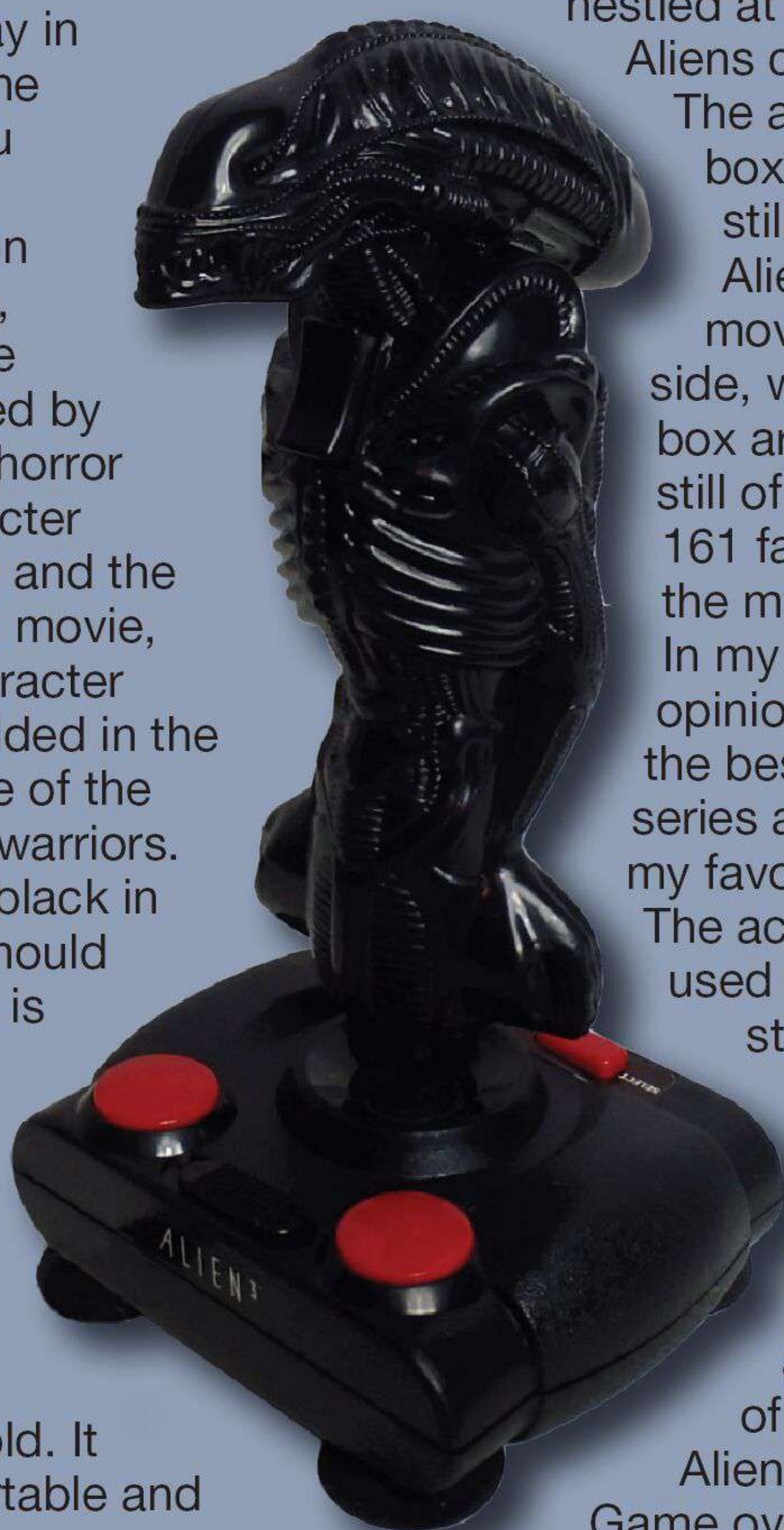
Above: The Cheetah Character sticks in all their boxed glory. While available for all standard 8-bit and 16-bit computer systems there were also NES and SEGA versions of each stick which tended to have a larger two button base.

ALIEN 3

They say in space, no one can hear you waggle! But down here on Planet Earth, that's not the case. Inspired by H.R Giger's horror movie character masterpiece and the 1992 Alien 3 movie, our final character stick is moulded in the shape of one of the iconic Alien warriors. Completely black in colour, the mould for this stick is beautifully detailed and actually, despite its unusual shape, a delight to hold. It feels comfortable and at home in the hand with a nicely placed trigger button nestled at the top of the Aliens chest.

The artwork for the box features a still image of the Alien from the movie on either side, while the inner box artwork has a still of the Fiorina 161 facility where the movie is set. In my humble opinion this is by far the best stick in the series and possibly my favourite looking. The actual mould used for this joystick, however, is of the Alien Warrior from the 1986 movie Aliens and not that of the 'Runner' Alien from Alien 3. Game over, man!

So, there you have it, a look at all five of Cheetah's character sticks, and if I'm honest, I think one word sums them all up. Gimmick! And that's just exactly what they are, cheap, cumbersome, uncomfortable gimmicks with not a microswitch in sight. I think it fair to say that these sticks are not going to improve your game playing prowess or make you a better player anytime soon.
But! Hold on just a minute! Look at the boxes, look at the awesome artwork and still movie images and let them evoke memories and feelings you have for these iconic characters on the box, and then take a peek through the see through window and drool as you see what could possibly be the coolest joystick you've ever seen!
Gimmick, Yes. Great joysticks, sadly not. Stirs up feelings and emotions of pure movie and TV nostalgia, absolutely!...
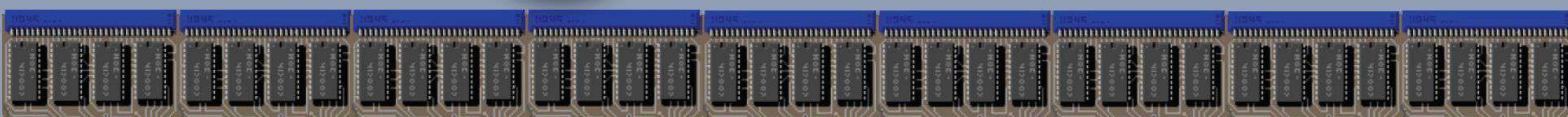
Specs: Amiga with 512Kb minimum.
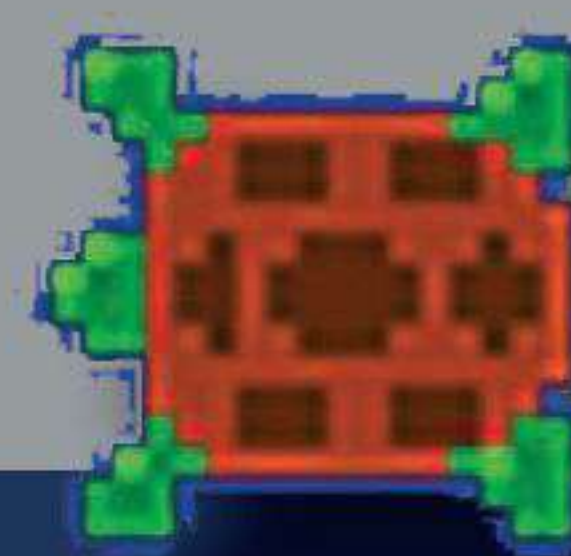
R.A.N.A.

Phaze 101 - 2021 (Free/Donation)

R.A.N.A, or *Reckless Amphibian New Adventures*, is yet another clone of the 1981 arcade classic *Frogger*. This time, it has been developed for the Amiga by Lorenzo Di Gaetano, as part of the Retro Programmers Inside Game Dev Challenge – quite the mouthful, there! The game was developed back in 2021, but after recent discussions with fellow enthusiasts, the developer has kindly compiled and published a version for us all to enjoy. As with the arcade original, the main objective is to reach your home at the top of the screen. Standing in your way, however, is a road chock full of speeding motorists, followed by a river with moving turtles and wooden logs that scroll horizontally across the screen. Successfully navigating your way through the busy traffic, across the river, and into your home rewards you with having to do it all over again until you get a total of five frogs safely across. After this, you'll progress to the next level, where you have to do the same thing all over again, albeit on a slightly more difficult setting.

The whole game, including the graphics, music, and SFX all have that look, feel, and sound of a classic PD title that would have come on a magazine cover disk back in the day, and I do like that. I also have to applaud Lorenzo for stepping up to the challenge of writing the game completely in 68000 assembly, no easy feat, well for me at least, anyway. Overall, R.A.N.A is a good Frogger clone, but in a world of countless versions, several of which are already available for the Amiga, the game fails to bring anything new or exciting to the table. Worth a play, but if Frogger is your thing, then I'd recommend you check out Croak!, another clone but with a fantastic two-player feature.

SCORE: 00100   TIME

GAME OVER
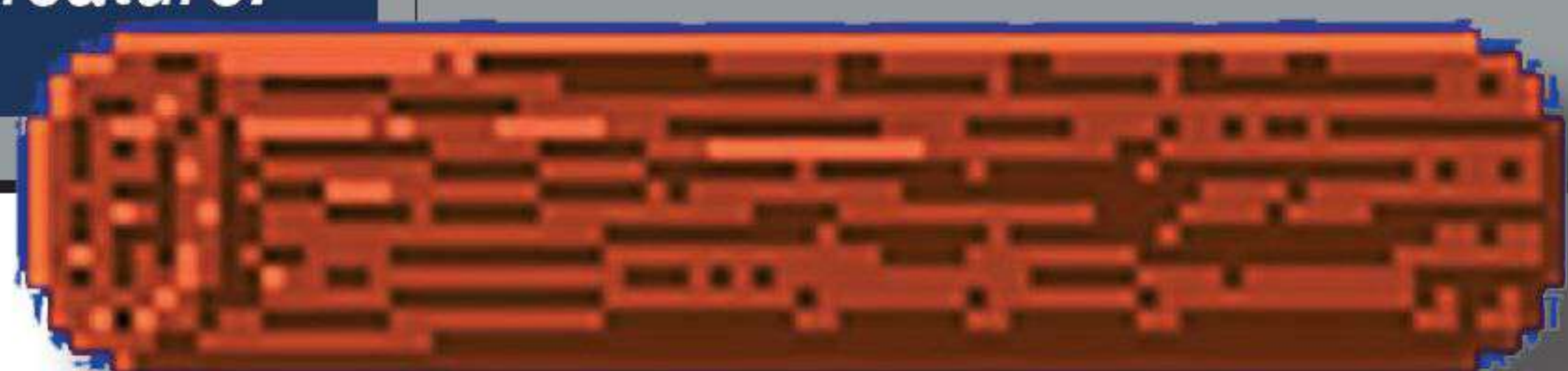
R.A.N.A. is, in essence, a clone of the classic Frogger arcade game, and while it's a one-man development, there's only a fraction of missing functions from the game. However, don't let that deter you, as the core gameplay is there, even though the difficulty certainly ramps up quickly between levels. For me, however, as the game isn't aiming for arcade perfection - especially given the age of the arcade classic - this just felt like a missed opportunity to add some quality-of-life features to bring some shine back on the lily pads.

PRESENTATION 62%
Basic title screen and that's it.

GRAPHICS 69%
Simple yet well-drawn, has that PD title look and feel about it.

SOUND 69%
Not quite Paul McCartney, but what's not to like about Frogger-style sounds?
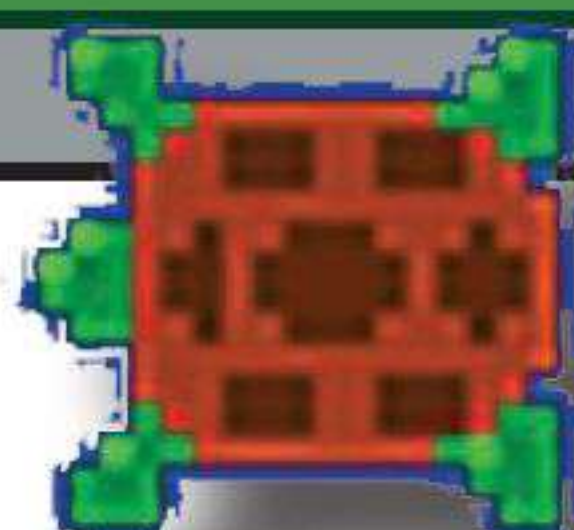
HOOKABILITY 73%
We all know the rules and it is easy to get into.

LASTABILITY 66%
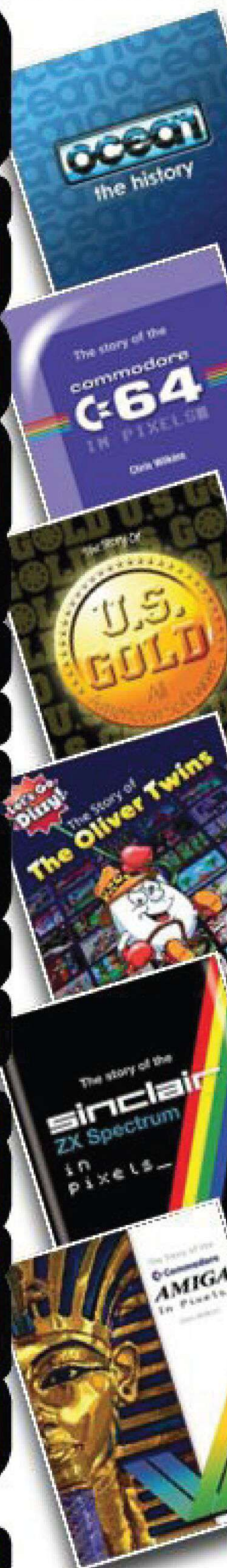It's a good clone but offers up nothing new as it becomes repetitive.

OVERALL 67%
Good effort and fun for a while, but you'll soon tire of repeating the same steps as previous amphibian offerings.

AMIGA Art

by Simon Butler

It's August 10th, and we're two days away from ZZAP! Live which, I've been told, will be filled with all manner of Commodore goodness, and here I am, once again behind schedule with my sinuses filled with what feels like hot soup and wire wool.

C'est la vie. There's Amiga art to be put on display, and words I need to pull out of the turnip I call a head, and somehow get them into a semblance of order for you poor long-suffering readers. So, hold onto your hats. Here we go!

1: Trapped in Space : Facet 2023

The ever reliable Facet, once again, comes up with the goods and rocks the pixelated world with yet another dynamite creation.

We're bordering on photorealism here, at least where the chimpanzee is concerned.

Ignore the pointed ears and feast your eyes on the magnificent work in not only the simian space traveller, but his outfit. This does not look like something born of imagination, it looks almost real, such is the talent on display.

This is truly a work of genius with lots of tricks and spiffy visuals doodads, like the floaty orbs and the lines of vertical energy. It's a treat from start to finish and, as with all of his creations, you think "well, how's he going to top this?"

Then he does and no doubt will do so next time.
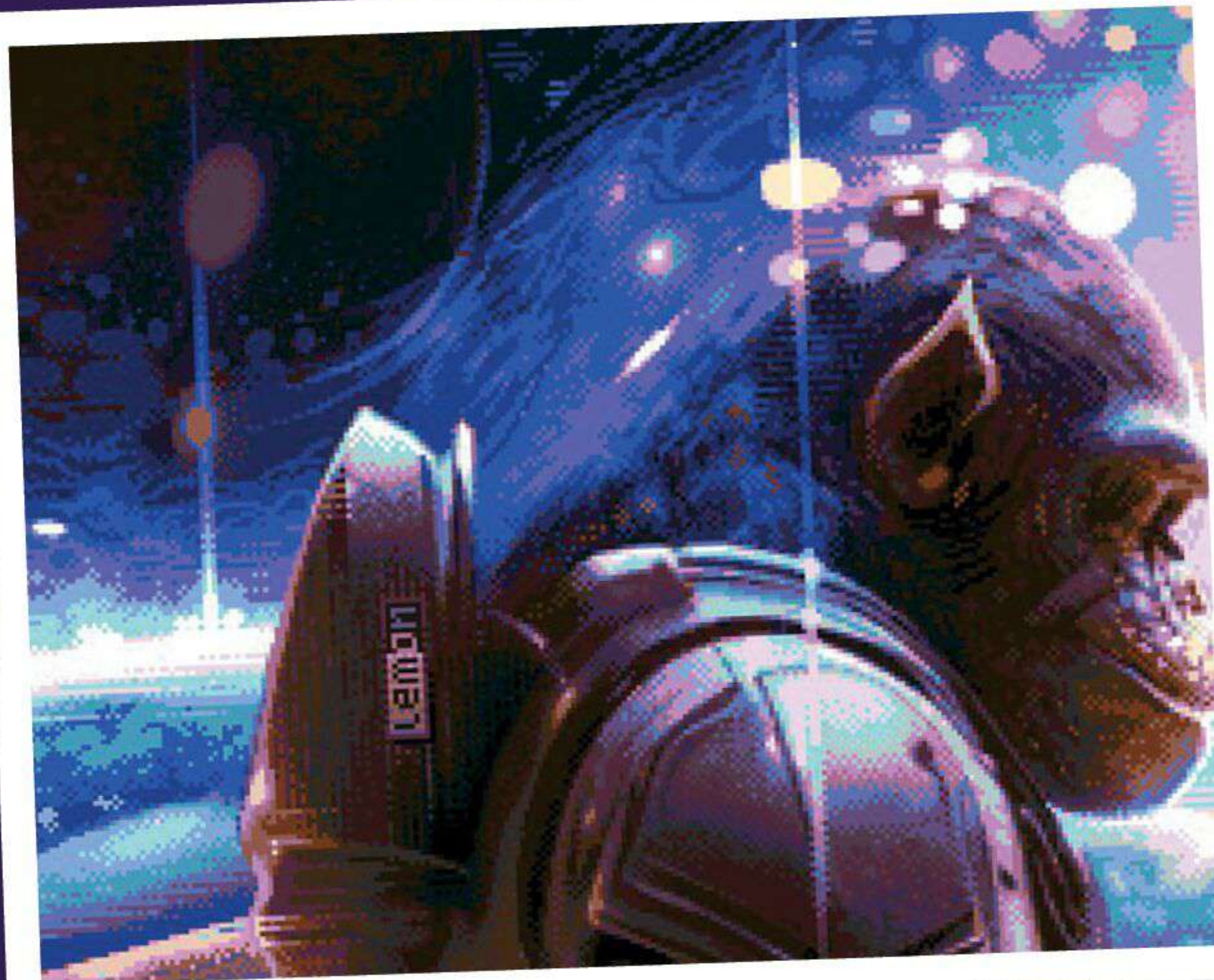
2: Moebius Effect : Prowler 2023

What this image, as amazing as it is, has to do with the Moebius Effect baffles this old dinosaur's brain.

But conundrums aside, the pixel skills here are as one would expect from Prowler, simply top notch.

The level of detail is superb, with his semi-trademark cubist touches in the folds of the trousers. The giant faceted shape, hanging ominously above the prone female, lends a hint of menace to the piece, which is reflected, some-what, in the dispirited look on her face.

Reflections in the fragmented platform that she is lying on are wonderfully done, but that can be said about every ele-ment of this piece. Prowler, as always, delivers a sterling image that packs a pixelated punch.

3. Broken Souls : Danny 2023

While never a great admirer of the Japanese school of foppish heroes with cheekbones that could slice a banana, there's no denying the sheer majesty of the pixel work here.

This particular image popped up on my Facebook feed, and to say I was stunned would be something of an understatement.

There is a painterly element throughout, from the flowing locks to the deft soft lines in the feathers and cold delineation of the armour.

But that's just part of what makes this so amazing.

In the background hangs a moon, baleful yellow and portentous.

Around the heads of the somewhat petulant pair float motes of ethereal dust and, to pull the image together, there in the centre are some superbly crafted roses.

Not my normal choice of topic, but when it's this good you just have to give in.

4: Fingerbanger : Optic 2023

Potentially scurrilous title aside, we're in the realms of cartoon imagery here, and that is by no means a slur, especially when the work is of such high quality.

The young lady in the image is, no doubt, some kind of mutant if the strange swirling energies emanating from her fingertips are anything to go by.

We're led to believe by her gunslinger smoke-blowing movement that she has been victorious in a battle, and the look of knowing determination in her eyes almost suggests that it would be unwise for anyone else to throw down the gauntlet.

Superbly crafted in cold tones of blue with the flesh and hair tones pulling the image to the centre, this is a great image from someone who knows their craft and never fails to deliver.
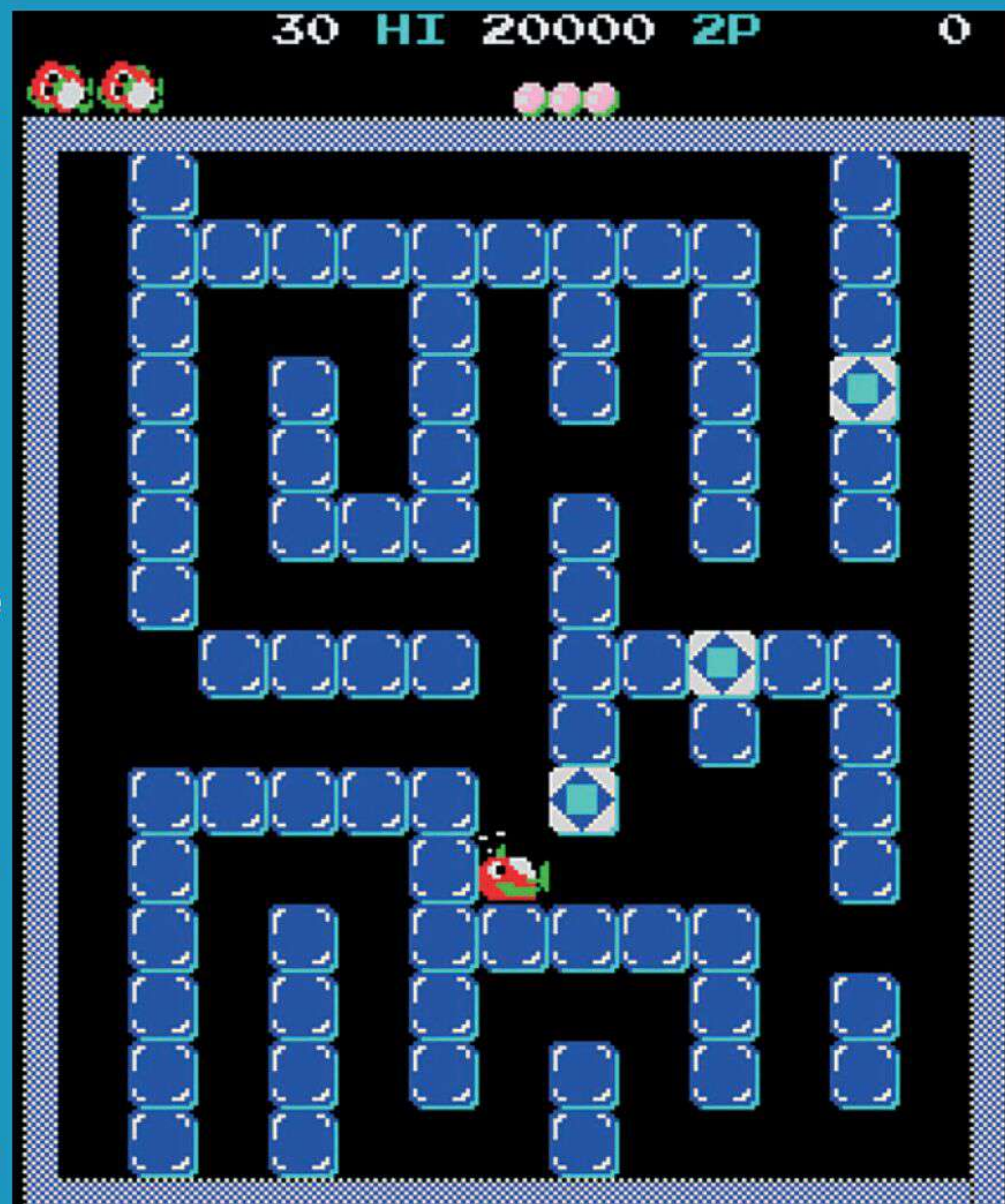
Pengo

JOTD — 2023 / £free to download

There seemed to be fear in ZZAP! Towers when review time came for *Pengo*, the 1982 classic from Sega; the disc sat around for quite a while, before straws were picked to 'take one for the team'. After all, *Pengo* has a reputation for fiendishness against the player. Yet the premise seems so simple; the game featuring the little red penguin who must crush evil multi-coloured balls (Sno-Bees) by pushing blocks of ice, the basic objective being to crush them all as fast as possible for maximum points. Those evil circular criminals can whip out their ice picks to destroy their way through and slowly edge toward you. Following similar AI traits to the likes of *Bubble Bobble*, the enemies are slow, cumbersome, and easily avoided during the early levels. They start picking up speed and tactics as you progress through each round, eventually providing a fast-paced experience that in the arcades became quite the coin eater. While your pocket change is safe here, the difficulty has not changed in the faithful arcade conversion - aiming for accuracy over its previous releases. With graphics, animation, and sound all standing shoulder to shoulder as proud and accurate replications, it was easy to boot up, press start, and ju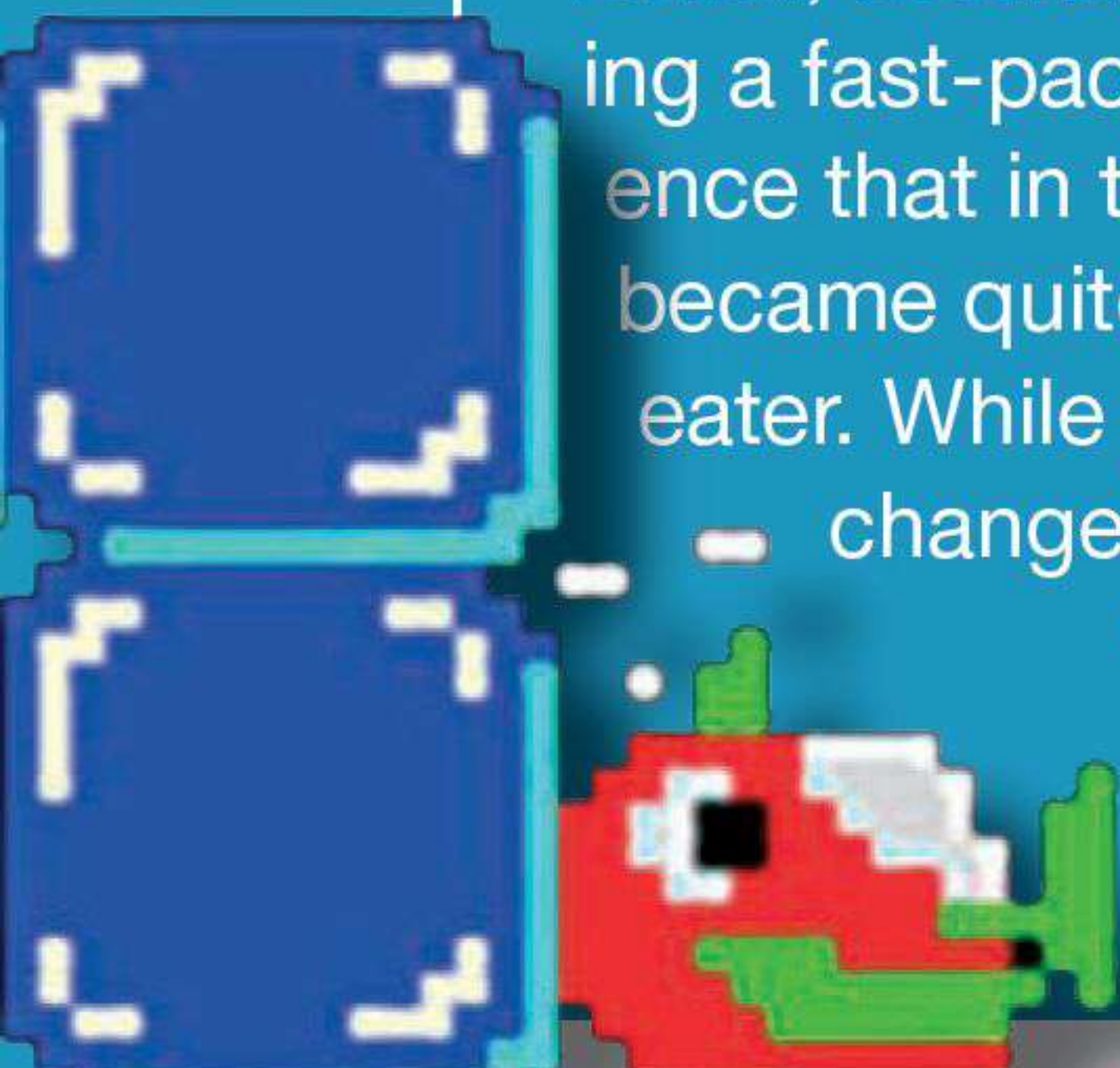mp straight into a game without too much frustration. However, your enjoyment will depend on how much you enjoy tile-based movement games, as your slower movement may put you at a disadvantage to the less experienced player due to the clunky nature of the control scheme. So does this make *Pengo* unfair? No, but with hindsight, there are tweaks that could be made to the arcade experience to make this a much more competitive title. But as a faithful recreation of a long-forgotten arcade mainstay, this version pulls no punches and delivers in every aspect.

C. T.

Tile-based movement games, for me, are hit-and-miss. While I love Chip's Challenge for its slower-paced route-planning solutions, this one doesn't always come to mind when I think of the Sega stable of arcade titles during the period. While the enemies add a reasonable level of frustration per level, and sometimes feel like they target you way too quickly, there is a charm to blitzing the levels quickly. Worth playing if you're interested in early arcade titles, but not a requirement.
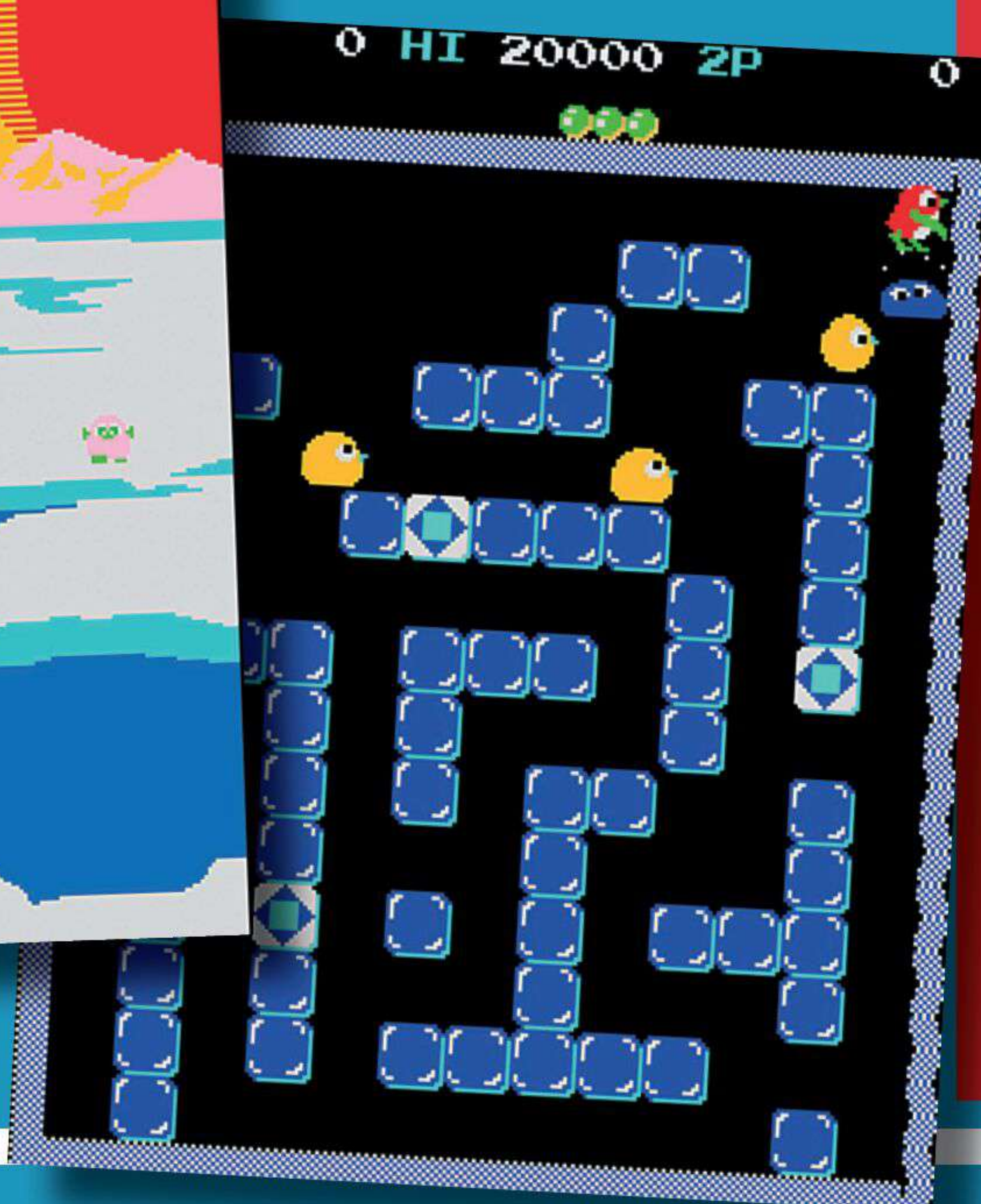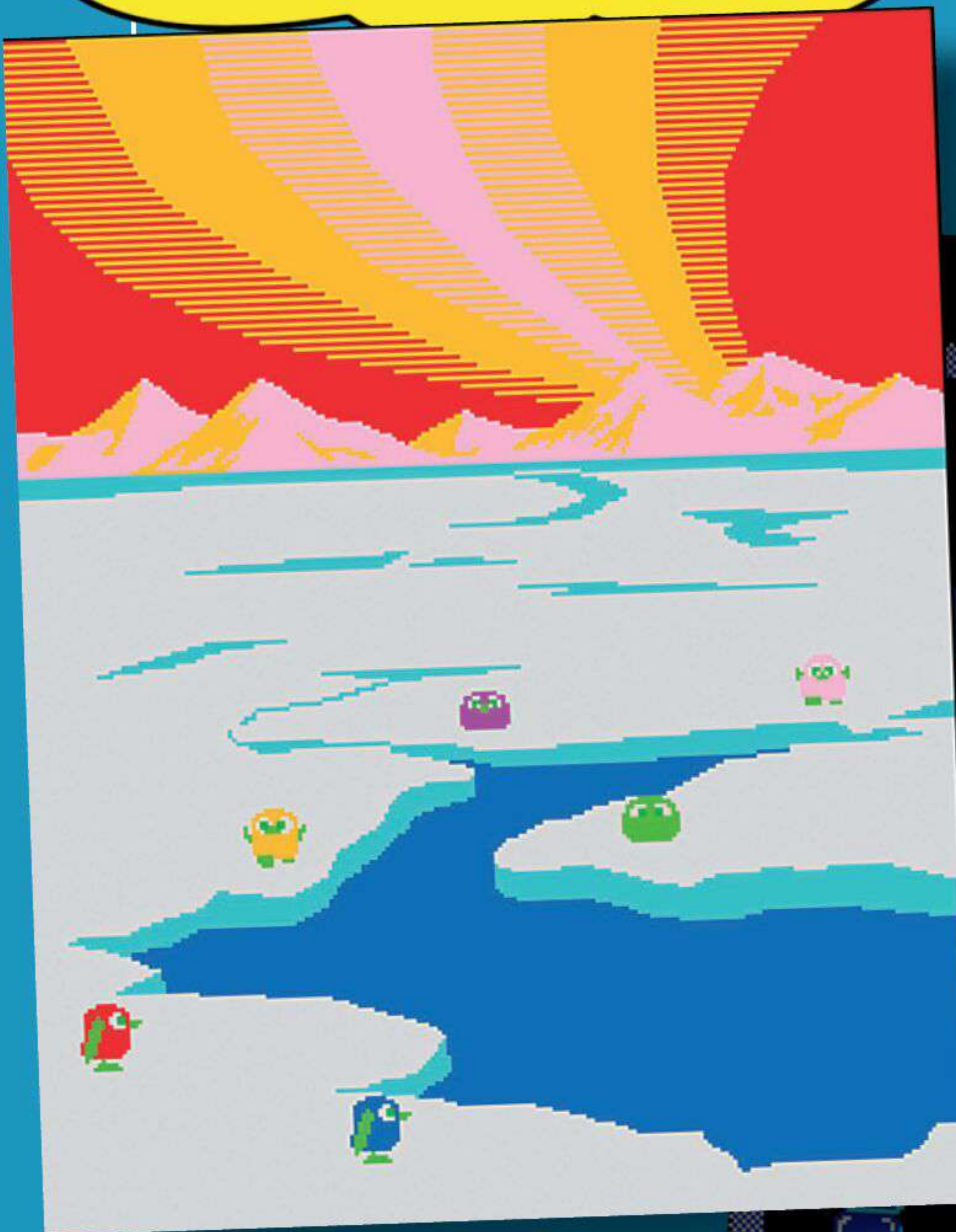
Get the game here

Pengo Trivia

Pengo was developed in 1982 by Coreland and published by Sega. Legend has it that *Pengo* is named after a combination of the words 'Penguin' and 'Go'.

There are two versions of the arcade cabinet: a Japanese version uses the licensed theme tune, "Popcorn".

The game was only officially ported to a few notable systems, including the Atari 2600, Atari 8-bit, Game Gear, and the C64, but the AMIGA never received an official port. One clone, notable for its name, was *Chilly Willy*, released on the C64 in 1984 by Prospective Software.

While I am not the biggest fan of the original Pengo, there is no doubting this is another authentic and well-made conversion. From the attract sequence to the dying penguin lying on his back, this looks and sounds almost identical. But I found myself dying a lot, and not being drawn back to try and get further. The game has always felt very aggressive to me, the Sno-Bees homing in on you too fast, even in the first few levels. The high time bonuses proved elusive, and I was frustrated. That's not a reflection on the conversion, but more a failing of the original. For maze fans, this is right up their path.

0 HI 20000 2P 0

PRESENTATION 86%
Arcade-accurate, including the excellent attract sequence and screen layout.

GRAPHICS 50%
Forty years old but matching the original's icy style.

SOUND 60%
Simple jingles and effects that start to grate after a while.

HOOKABILITY 79%
The first few goes will prove frustrating as you get killed quickly.

LASTABILITY 79%
Your passion for the game will cool over time, as later levels do not change much.

OVERALL 83%

Another great JOTD conversion of a classic arcade game.

AMIGA Bookshelf

For all you Amiga fans, there are lots of great books out there. **ANDREW FISHER** looks at another release that covers this classic machine.

The Little Book Of Sound Chips – Volume 2: 1982-1986

Authors: Chris Abbott, Andrew Laggan
RRP: € 9.99 (PDF/e-pub)

Chris Abbott of C64 Audio is a fan of all things chiptune, publishing remix CDs and organising live events. Andrew Laggan is a hobbyist musician and retrogaming historian. Together, they have created this series of four books focussing on the sound chips inside computers, consoles, and arcade games. The first volume covered 1977 to 1981, covering famous chips such as those found in the Atari VCS, the BBC Micro and the ZX Spectrum range.

The second volume starts, as they technical terms used in the book. Throughout, there are plenty of QR codes to scan, which take you to YouTube videos or related websites where you can listen to the music mentioned or read more information. In the PDF version, there are hyperlinks too. After a discussion on C64 loading tunes, the SID chip itself is dissected in technical detail. Each chip then gets a gallery of images. For the C64, this includes famous demos as well as games. The following chapters discuss arcade sound chips, the NES, the ill-fated Atari AMY chip, and the Yamaha YM chips found in the Atari ST and arcade games of the late

Mega Demo on the AMIGA.

2×SIN SHADE BOBS

Hardwired, Amiga OCS/ECS
1991 Crionics & The Silents
Jesper Kyd

Sounds astonishingly contemporary. Not surprising since
Jesper Kyd has become a successful video game and film composer.
His sound in 1991 is the world's sound now.

398 - AmigaRemix Paula Demo Choice

1980s. The TED chip in the Plus/4 and C16 gets a mention, and there is a section about the differences between European and Japanese chiptune composing.

The Amiga section takes up 70 pages, starting with quotes from composer Allister Brimble and a discussion of how the sample-based sound of Paula worked. The Arcadia coin-op system, powered by Amiga hardware, also gets a mention. The huge gallery of games follows, with the QR codes as described. A selection of Spanish Amiga games is highlighted before pages of famous demo tunes are applauded. Each game, or demo, gets a full-colour screenshot to bring back memories. There is also a brief review or factoid for each

screenshot, adding all-important background details or humorous comments on how it sounds. This volume then ends with the "Dave" chip found inside the short-lived Enterprise computer, and the Konami chip used for expanding MSX sound and in certain arcade games.

As a huge fan of computer music, I was thoroughly absorbed by this book (and the first volume). There is ample technical detail, but it is never dry. With copious quotes from musicians,

programmers, and fans, you get the context of the chip and the way it was used. The smaller format makes it great to leaf through, and being full colour the images really stand out and bring back memories – or make you interested in something you haven't played/heard. Volume 3 will cover 1987-1991, with 16-bit consoles and the growth in PC sound cards. Volume 4 will take the story from 1992 up to 2004, as the CD formats gave the chance to use increasingly "real" music – but still needed great composers and programmers to make the best out of the different formats and how they managed the music.

A double spread all about Paula!

DEMOSCENE Legends

Welcome to 'Demoscene Legends'. I'm your host, Judge Drokk, and today we celebrate a pair of the most recognisable demos ever, even to some who are unfamiliar with Amiga itself. A pair that, for reasons that will be revealed later, I have been hesitant to explore since ZZAP! AMIGA magazine was born.

State of the Art (1992) and 9 Fingers (1993) by Spaceballs
Code: Lone Starr & Major Asshole / GFX: TMB Design / Music: Travolta & Vinnie

It's a plain and simple fact that the demoscene has now reached a technical level far beyond what was imagined possible in the early 1990s, fuelled by the benefit of cross-party development, increased understanding of the hardware, and optimisation to the highest level.

Despite all this, it's almost impossible to create something that will have the lasting impact of the groundbreaking releases of the early 1990s. It takes a magic ingredient to create a piece of work that will be looked at 30 years from now in the same way as we look back at this pair of seminal works from Spaceballs.

One way to do this is to create a release that will capture the imagination of the individual who has no interest or understanding of the demoscene, or what a demo actually is, and do this by utilising one of the earliest forms of entertainment - animation. In this case, of the human body.

Most Amiga owners, creators, and demosceners at the time were male, of course. So, in the spirit of the 1985 film comedy 'Weird Science', and because no one wants to see a man dancing unless it's John Travolta (ironically Travolta was the handle of SOTA's musician), the female form became the main subject of this computer-programmed digital manipulation of our imagination which was captured, helpless and unable to submit.

Cleverly, or by design,

State of the Art animates what are essentially simple-yet-lifelike female silhouettes through various dance moves, alternating via rapid metamorphic sequences and overlaid with moving stencil rave/ happy hardcore/ acid visual effects.

There's not a spare moment for reflection before the sequence flips and morphs once again, keeping your attention for the full run-time. In case you were to forget that it's actually an Amiga demo and not MTV, a rotating filled vector sequence appears midway and brings you, briefly, back to more traditional demoscene entertainment. One year later, Spaceballs released the follow up, *9 Fingers*.

Bigger and better in every way? Most who were 'there' will agree, though some just can't get over the original. The budget and production are next level, while once again playfully objectifying the female human form through the medium of dance.

The biggest visual upgrade comes with the ladies themselves. Filmed and digitally captured, they're given an extra dimension, detail, shading, and even clothing. Ironically, it's the clothing that dates this demo the most, putting it right back in 1993!

So why was I so hesitant to cover *State Of The Art* over the last two years? Maybe it was because it was the release that beat my own team's demo, 3D Demo II (4.7 points to 4.31), to 1st place at our own demo party in 1992? Maybe it's become a little over-saturated through the years? Whatever the reason, there's no denying that this demo is a crowd-pleaser, though, of course, being a good dancer definitely helped!
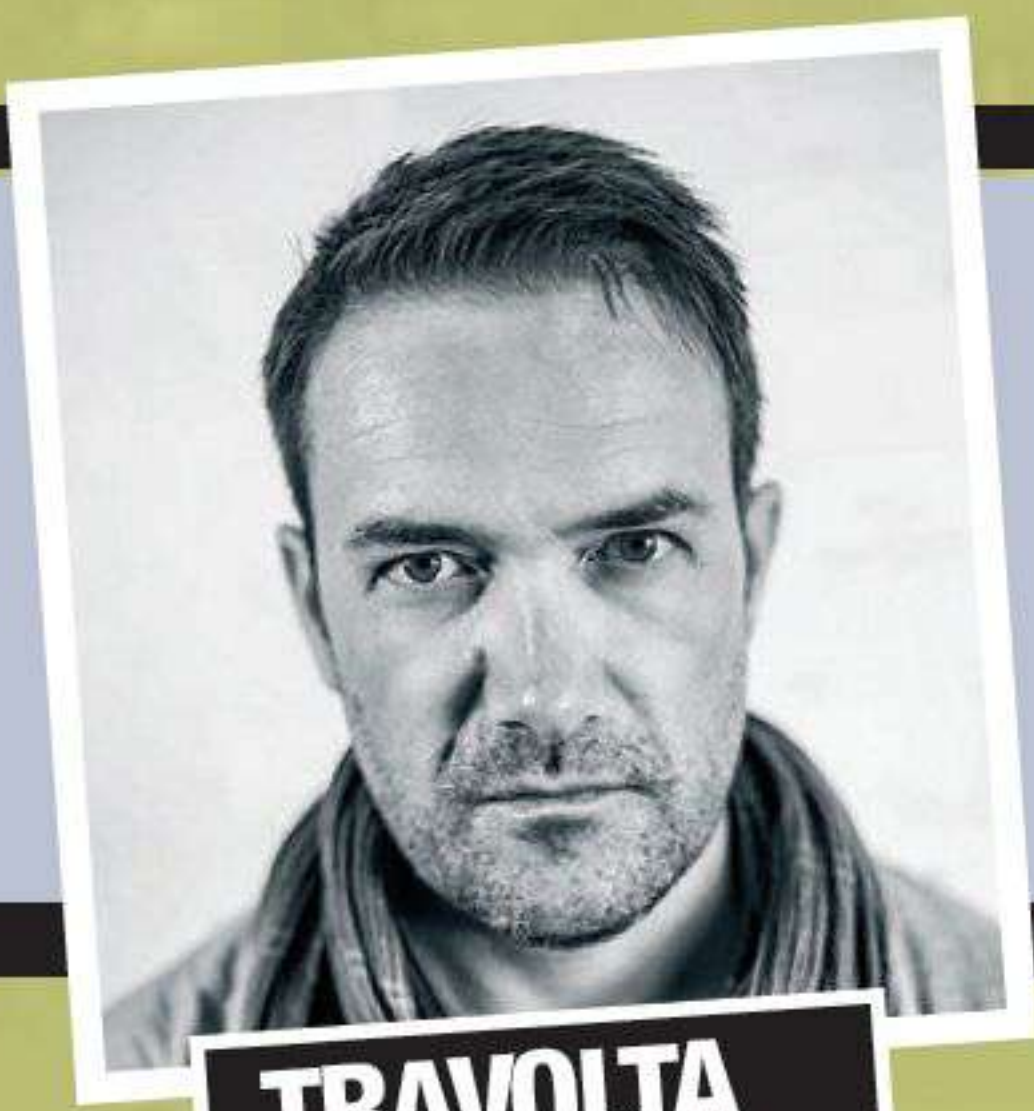
# A CHAT WITH TRAVOLTA & LONE STARR OF SPACEBALLS and TEO OF REBELS

JD - Hello, guys. There are Amiga fans alive today who weren't yet born when 'State Of The Art' and '9 Fingers' were released. They have lived a life of PlayStation, Xbox, and PC, and yet SotA and 9 Fingers blow their socks off on first viewing and form a long-lasting memory. Why do you think this is so?

Travolta - Perhaps because these demos were more like music videos and therefore accessible to anyone then and now. I always heard non-computer people were also appreciating them.

  Lone Starr - I think the key word is simplicity. It does one thing well. Even though, contrary to what many think, it took pretty advanced code to achieve
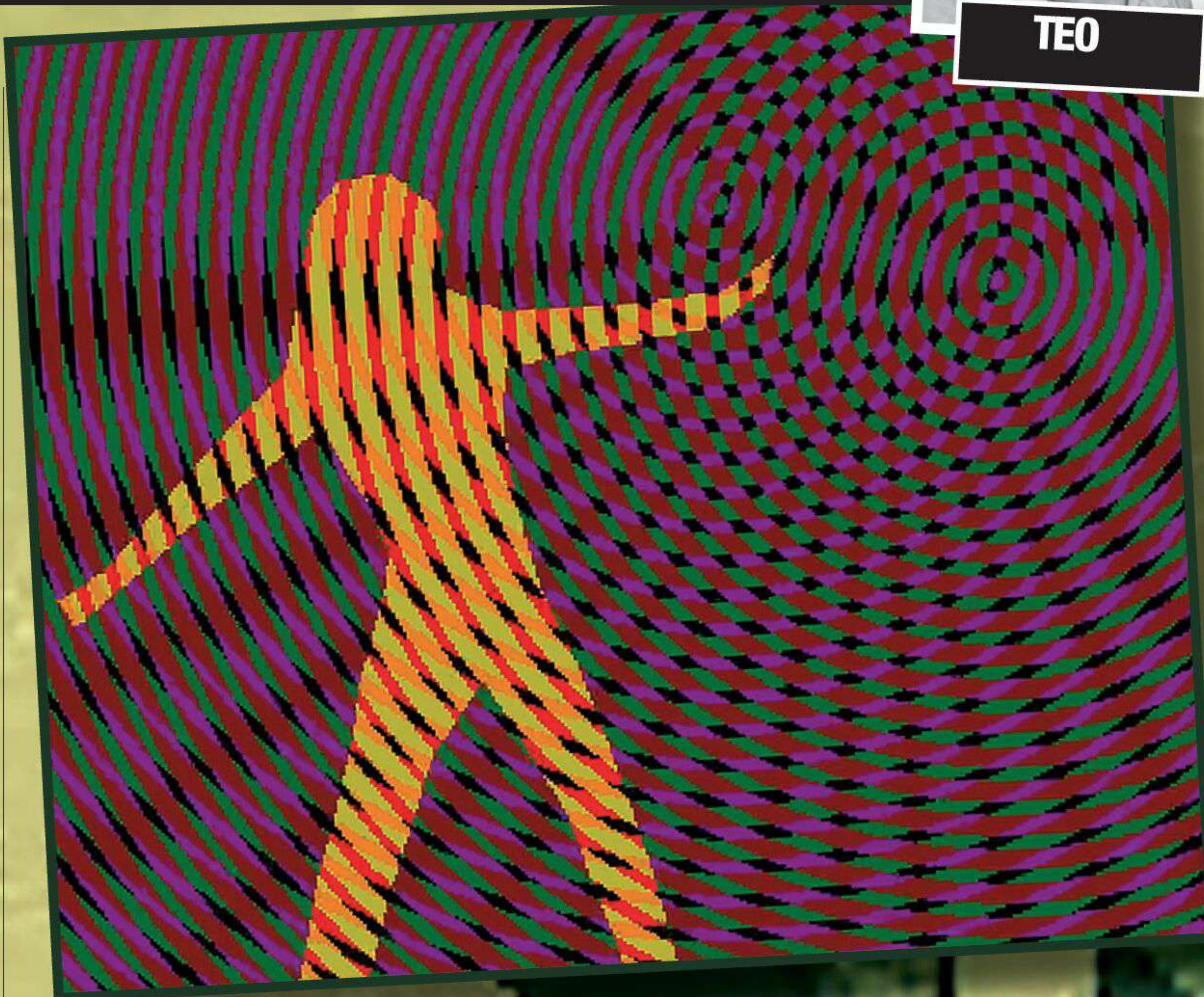
this. Less is more, I guess.

JD - In the 1990s, my personal perception of Spaceballs was as an 'event' group, massive releases at the biggest parties. The two demos in question avoided virtually all of the tropes of the demoscene, such as scrolling messages and boastful announcements of impending, record-breaking routines. Was this a design choice from the outset?

Travolta - For sure, the aim was to present something different

that anyone could like. It was also about taking inspiration from something that was outside of the demoscene. It was much about bringing influences from techno/raves/ music videos to sceners.

Lone Starr - Yes, absolutely,

minimalistic. I strived for making it even simpler. I wanted to leave out the picture of the dragon in *SOTA*, despite the great artwork, as I think it messes it up. But we were a crew, and I had to be accommodating.

JD - These two releases alone make a perfect C.V. for entry into the videogame industry. Did this actually happen?

Travolta - I do believe that some of the Spaceballers went on to work on games. From memory, both the main coder Lone Starr (Paul Endresen) and the GFX artist TMB designs (Tore Blystad) worked for Norwegian game company Funcom after

the demoscene.

Teo of Rebels adds - Check the intro sequence for *Winter Gold* on Super Nintendo for an interesting connection with '9 Fingers', - even Lone Starr's then-girlfriend (the brown-haired girl in the demo) is credited in the game.

Lone Starr - Yeah, I can't answer for everyone, but *Winter Gold* by Nintendo (*FX Skiing* in the US), was a direct result of *9 Fingers* (and also how I got a job indirectly for Nintendo at age 18 through game developer Funcom). A funny story, we filmed the girls dancing in the *Winter Gold* menus at Funcom wearing almost no clothes. Just before release, we had to redo it with a lot more clothes on as it didn't pass US "Parental Safety". Also, it was the same girl seen dancing in both demos, too. We filmed some other girls, but only used her footage.

A

S P A C E B A L L S™

P R O D U C T I O N

@TMB DESIGNS
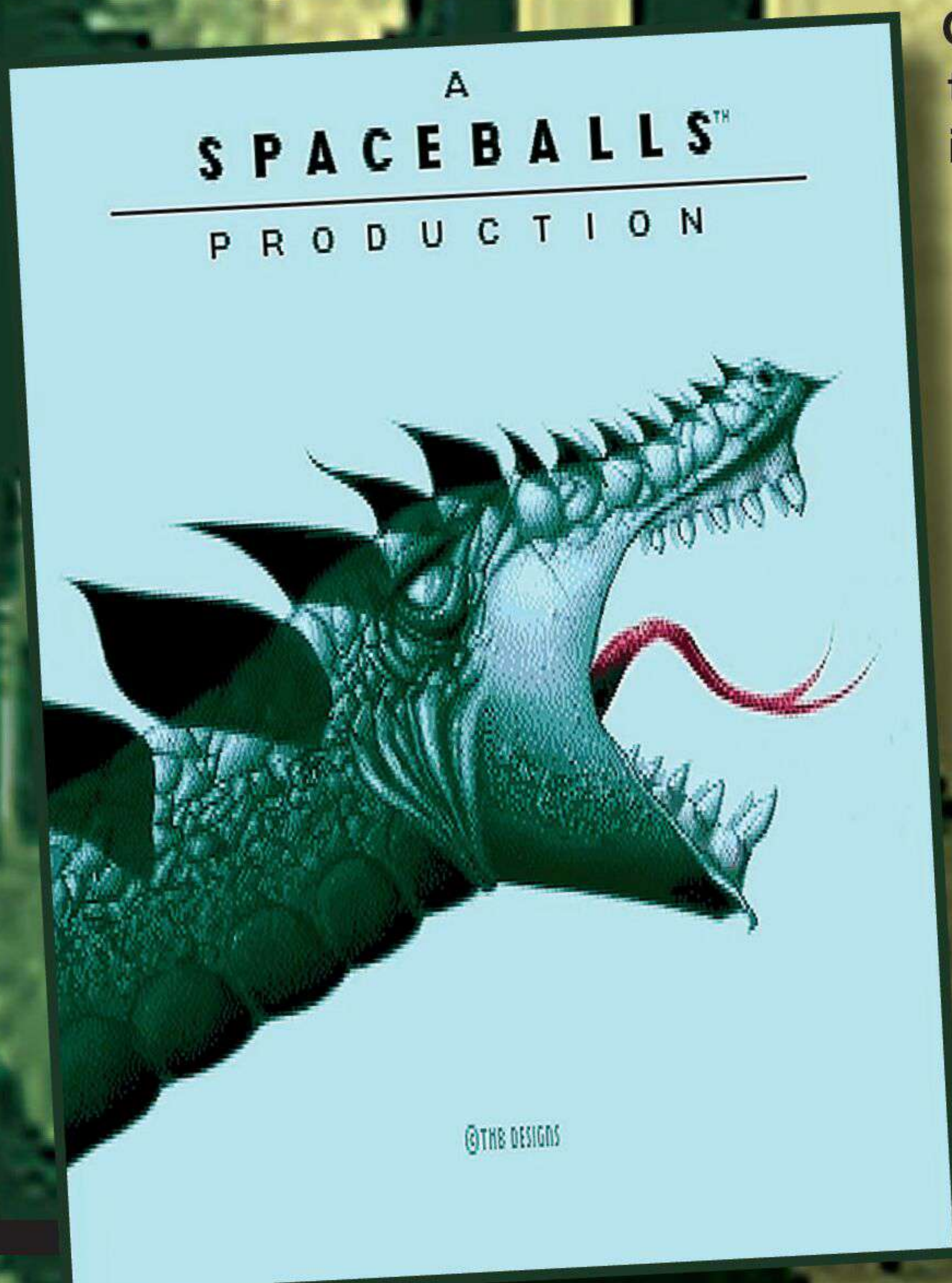
ZZAP! LIVE! 2023

The true spirit of ZZAP! is alive and well, and was filling the rooms and corridors of the Holiday Inn, Kenilworth. The first ever ZZAP! LIVE event from Chris Wilkins' Fusion Retro Books and Revival Retro Events, in collaboration with South West Amiga Group and Retro Computer Museum. Our AMIGA party expert, Judge Drokk, recalls what a fab event it was...

You could describe the ZZAP! LIVE event as a gathering of 40 and 50-year-old teenagers - this is exactly the buzz I felt. We were the Commodore fans of the 80s and 90s, the ZZAP! readers and game players of yesteryear.

Except today, our heroes, such as Jeff Minter, Andrew Braybrook, and Jon Hare, were in the room with us. We became the interviewers, chatting and asking questions about the games of our youth, yet the day was about so much more. It felt like we'd waited 35 years for this to happen.

The event was a meticulously planned affair. A well-thought-out floor plan consisted of themes and eras. Hardware was segregated into zones – The Early Years (1982-1983), The Classic Years (1984-1987), The Latter Years (1988-1992), plus a Fusion zone which explored non-Commodore systems - ready to play.

A dedicated Q&A room hosted a quartet of lively talks with informal chat and questions from attendees. A broad and varied selection of merchandise was available, too. However, this wasn't a 'market' as such; the sellers were big names such as C64AUDIO, Psytronik, and AMICOM, authors of the '8-Bit-Kids' book, and of course, Fusion Retro Books, who now carry the torch passed by the much missed Oliver Frey and Roger Kean - I

Judge Drokk with Chris Wilkins.
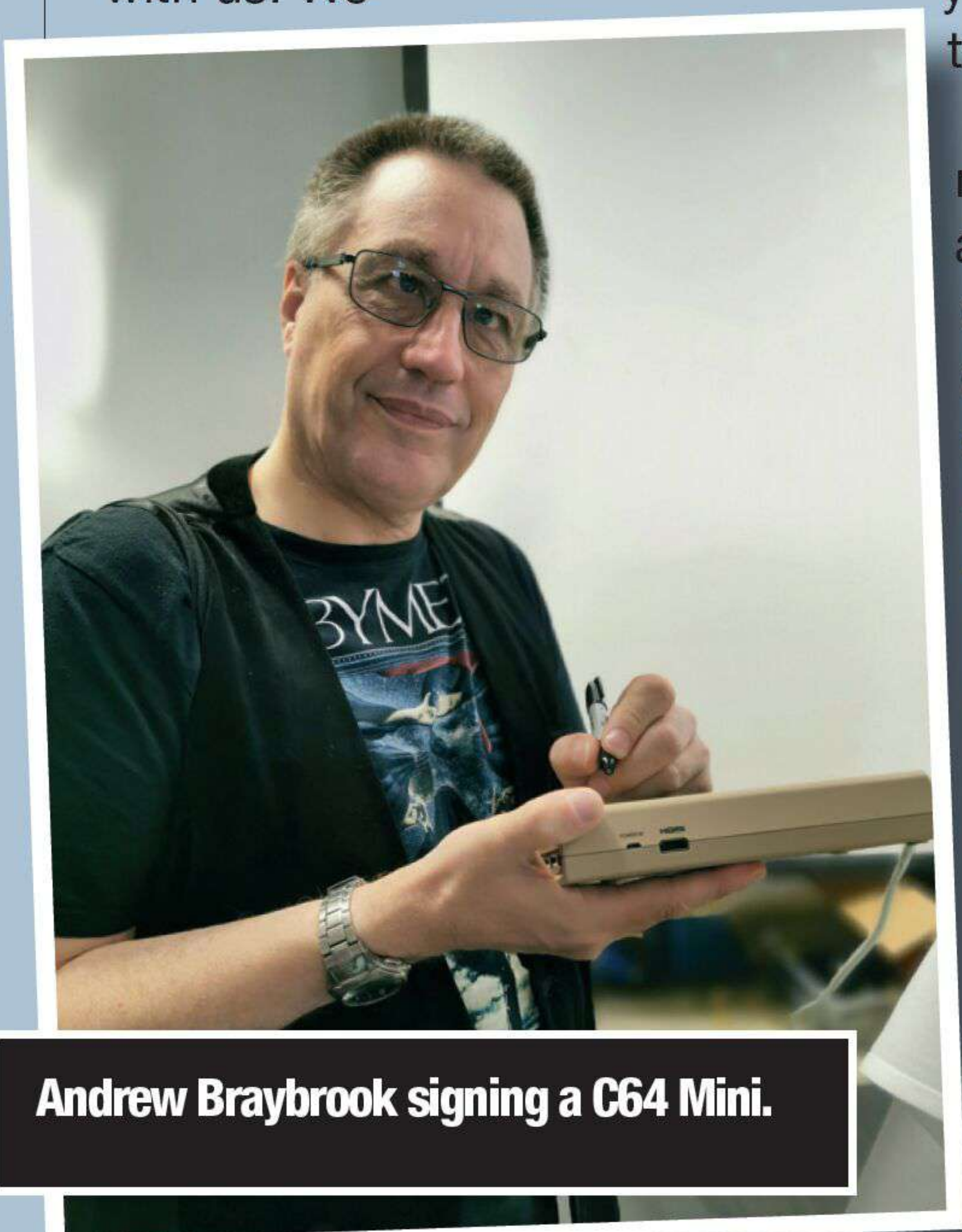
Andrew Braybrook signing a C64 Mini.

think they would have been proud of the event, and I'm sure they were there in spirit.

The day officially started at 10 a.m., but I feel if you stayed at the hotel the night before, you may have squeezed in an hour or two extra. In reality, expanding the event an extra day would have still left us wanting more.

My highight was meeting some of my gaming heroes.

Jeff Minter and Giles who, along with pixel artist turned film-maker Paul (D0KK) Docherty, were chatting and showing an exclusive portion of Paul's eagerly awaited Llamasoft film 'Heart Of Neon'

ZZAP! 64 legend Gary Penn was present, and reuniting him with his felt creation 'Ancipital', the title character from the Llamasoft game, was a great moment.

Plus, watching Andrew Braybrook playing *Uridium* and discovering that it's as tough for him as it was for the rest of us, now he's forgotten where all the walls are - crash!

So, that was the day... but the night was yet to come, as Dark Blue Monkey will explain...

The Night Event
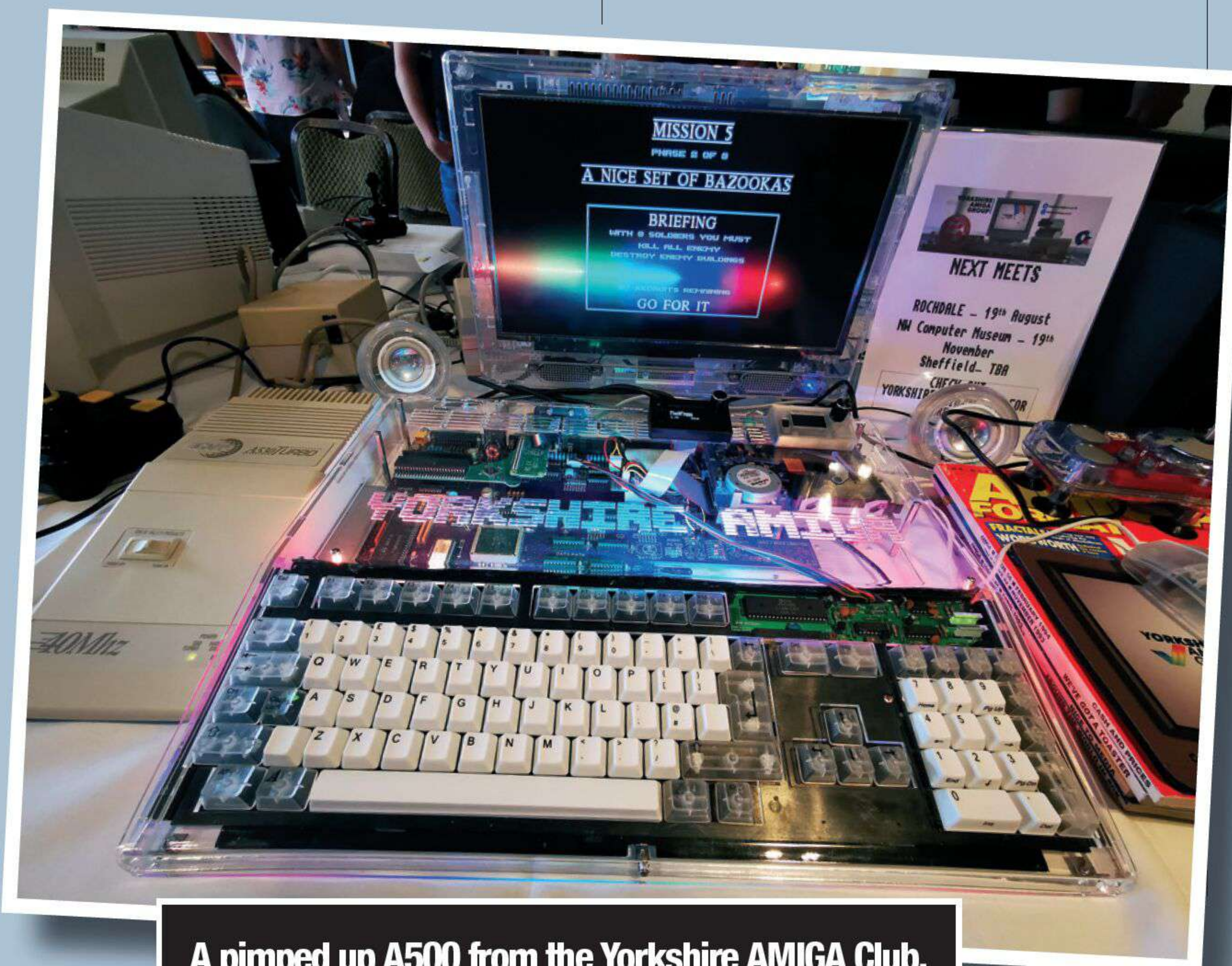(by Dark Blue Monkey)

The energy picked right up

Gary Penn with Judge Drokk and Ancipital

A pimped up A500 from the Yorkshire AMIGA Club.

where the main event left off, giving everyone time to settle in with their drinks to a very well-scored gameplay showreel.

Kenz, from Psytronik, put together a breathtaking special featuring loved classics choreographed to a brilliant mix of chiptunes and a thumping dance track. Breaks and crescendos were perfectly timed to scene switches between beloved shmups, platformers, and puzzlers from almost the whole range of the C64/Amiga era. Murmurs of recognition rippled about as people nodded along to that SID sound, while on-screen, the player battled through level after level.

A ZZAP!-hosted, music-

themed Q&A followed with a panel including Jon Hare (Sensible Software), Mike Clarke (Psygnosis), Pete Clarke (Ocean/Software Creations), and Barry Leitch via Skype.

Despite the mandatory technical issues, we were given behind-the-scenes snapshots of the creation of iconic tunes such as *Ocean Loader 3*, *Parallax*, and many more. Despite (almost unanimously) voting *Spellbound* as the panel's favourite, it was lovely to hear these legends showing affection and appreciation for each others' work.

Then came the event we had been waiting for. Firstly, Jon Hare (an accomplished guitarist) was accompanied by Mark 'TDK' Knight on violin, taking us through a set covering his latest compositions

(including a love song which turns hilariously dark) and golden oldies like *War!* from *Cannon Fodder*. The interplay between the two on stage was great to watch, clearly having fun with the bizarre tempo changes Jon threw in.

Possibly the best moment was when Jon sang a song he composed (and busked himself!) especially for an ECTS game show to advertise *Sensible Soccer*, with the bizarre and hilarious lyrics you'd expect!

Jon then surrendered the centre stage to Mark. Mouths were agape as he energetically wove his violin on top of his own SID and Nintendo chip compositions using a custom-designed FX chain, perfectly emulating that square wave feel yet with the agility of a real

instrument. Around him, disco lights flashed while custom visuals featuring *Street Fighter* sprites were composed and distorted live on the big screens!

The audience, naturally, demanded an encore which, if I'm honest, was the most nostalgic tune of the set, being a Violin/SID adaptation of Csárdás, by Rob Hubbard, for *Rasputin*.

At the end, the audience were asked if they would like Mark's next CD to be violin AND chiptune; the response was a deafening "Yes!". I don't think we've ever heard anything quite like it, and I heartily recommend you check him out on Bandcamp!

Rounding out the evening, C64 DJs (listed as Jonathan Taylor and Max Hall) played a great set of SID tunes, winding the evening down as everyone filed to the bar for a final drink and a chat.

It was clear that everyone was (as Mark said above) an adult teenager once again, enraptured by heroes we've looked up to in our youth, made real before our eyes. Music has a way of bringing the past back with a vivid intensity, and I think there was something in the evening for everyone to love, no matter the era you hold dearest.

Jon Hare and Mark Knight playing something 'sensible'.

amigamejam

create. inspire. play.

Sword & Sorcery

After a slow start, there have been some promising submissions to this year's event. Mark caught up with organiser, Amiga Cammy, whilst Andrew put all the entries through their paces.

What was the inspiration behind selecting the Sword and Sorcery theme?

It seemed like a recurring theme at the time with quite a number of Sword & Sorcery TV shows, movies, and games coming out. I felt inspired by all the fantasy TV shows that I was watching at the time such as Willow, The Witcher, House of the Dragon, and Rings of Power and I was also reading a fantasy novel at the time - The Well of Tears by Cecilia Dart-Thornton. I also felt like we needed more games in that genre for the Amiga platform.

Besides yourself, who else is involved in organising the AmiGameJam?

I'm the main organiser, along with friends from the Amiga community who have helped me out with various tasks. These include Paulee Alex Bow, who did the theme song for the AmiGameJam intro video, AmigaBill for being such an incredible host of the AmiGameJam results live-stream, and a great friend, Stephen Jones of Checkmate for his kind encouragement and direct support in providing a fantastic First Prize last year. Also, Nivrig for helping me set up a Discord channel for the jam, which has been invaluable for the participants, IndieRetroNews for his amazing constant coverage of the Amiga scene and the AmiGameJam games, Jamie of Bitmap Soft for helping out with prizes, DemosceneTV for hosting the AmiGameJam website that lists the current jam as well as previous ones, Adrian Cummings, of Mutation Software, who generously helped me out with a participation pack of digital prizes, and Bill Borsari for helping mail out the prizes. Hopefully I haven't left anyone else out!

**There was a long time** before the first entry. Were you nervous that this year's competition wouldn't take off?

It was a bit concerning, for sure. I worried that perhaps no one liked the theme or they simply didn't have time to enter the jam, which is why I decided to extend it by three months. I felt very relieved when I saw the entries finally coming in before the deadline ended, which is something I can totally relate to, as I also tend to leave projects until the last minute.

Caravandalf - Peter Mackay

This is a fun vertically scrolling shoot 'em up, and I like the fantasy theme. The difficulty level seems set quite high at present, and there could have been more variety in the attack waves. The caravan part refers to the limited time, making it ideal for a high-score challenge. I applaud Peter and Gordon for a good attempt with their debut game.
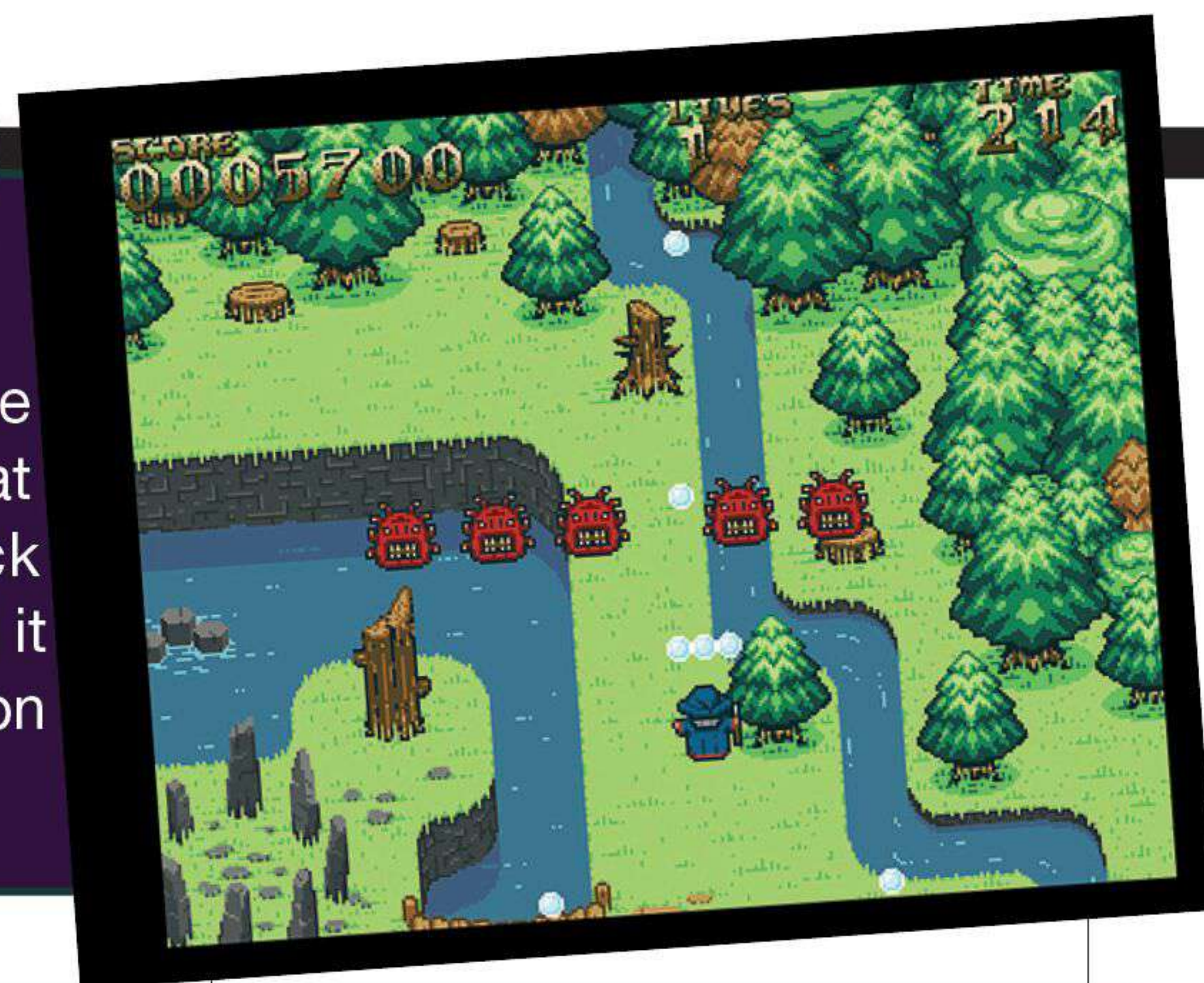
King Arthur : Rise of the Round Table - LateBit

The inspiration from Moonstone is fairly obvious, with the bloody corpses lingering onscreen. The dialogue is funny too - but there is just so little of a finished game here to properly critique. The AI is rather limited, meaning enemies crowd you. But with more work, this could shape up into something interesting.
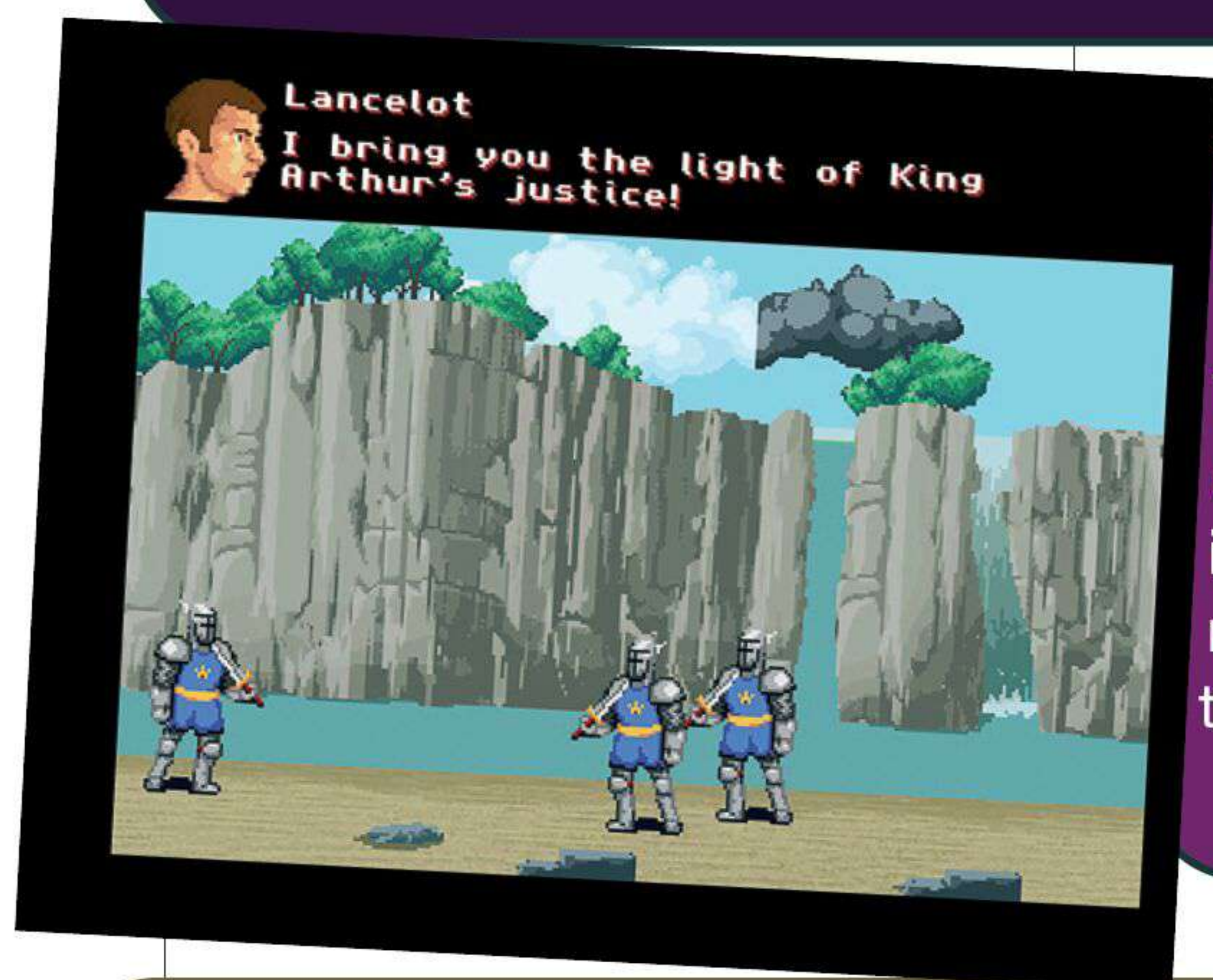
Gothicvania -Amitem Games

We are back in that Castlevania mood for this fairly impressive game. I really liked the atmosphere the graphics generated, especially the main sprite. There were a few issues with control and enemy placement that made this feel tricky. This is pretty polished as it stands and a great entry to the jam.

Holiday - Lifeschool

The period detail is interesting in this one, and I'm sure you can have fun with this point-and-click adventure created in CanDo. However, I was struggling to run the game properly (in emulation) and to make any real progress.
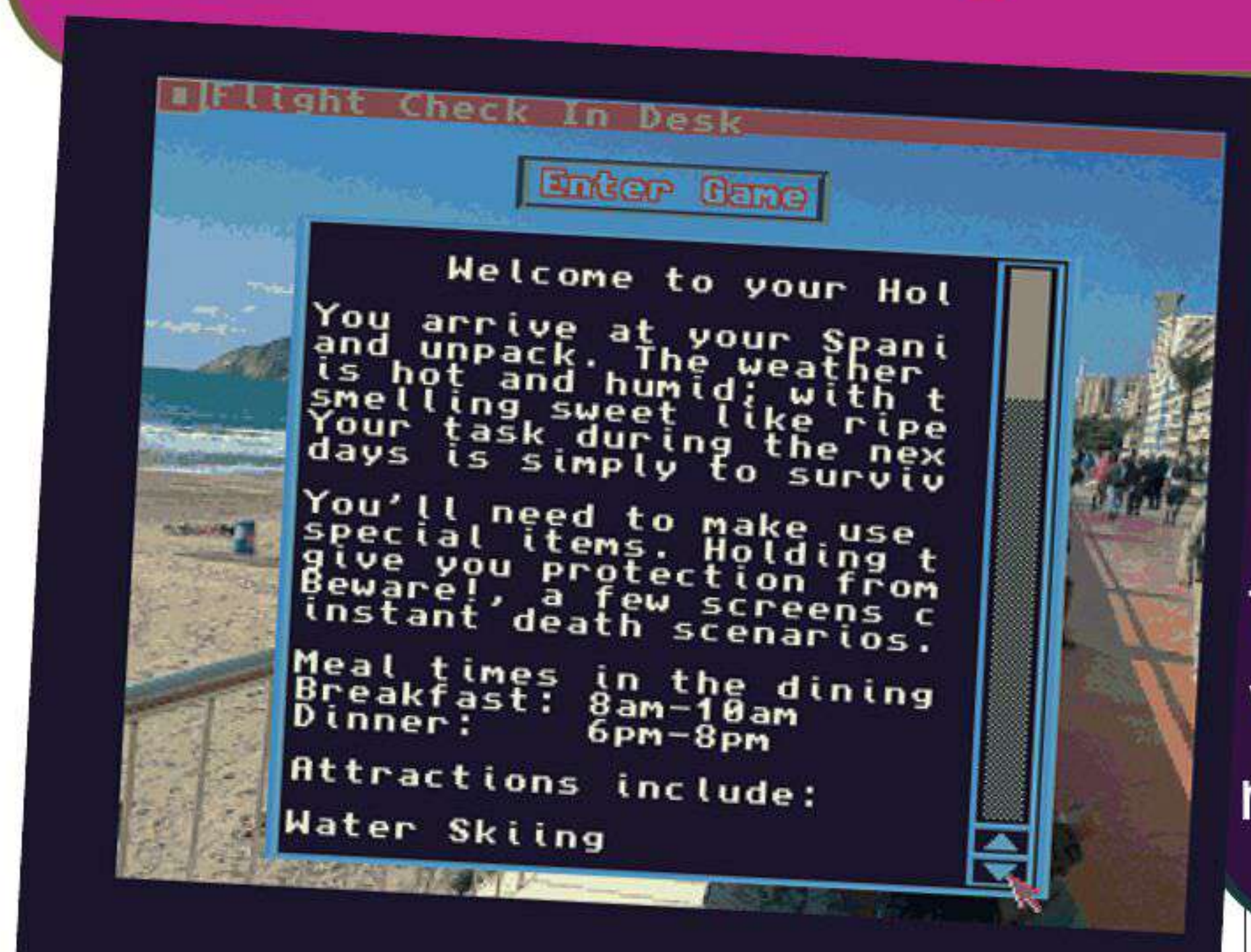
## Roguecraft (Jam Version) - Badgerpunch Games

This glimpse of the game in progress is outstanding. The graphics are brilliant, with the isometric view containing plenty of details and gorgeous enemies. Having played the C64 original, the atmosphere is even darker and more absorbing here. The music is excellent, too. The first few goes proved difficult, due to the random nature of enemies and level layout, but experience let me get further and learn tricks to survive. The promise of extra gameplay mechanics and more enemy types is mouthwatering!

Jack the Pitt - Earok

Created in just 48 hours, this is one tough cookie. I did like the idea of "building" your own platforms to make your way upwards. The graphics are reasonable but simple, and I like how you emerge into the sunny blue sky area. However, the difficulty feels very excessive and it becomes frustrating; being knocked back down a long way soon gets to you. With a power-up to protect you or a few small tweaks, this would be very playable.
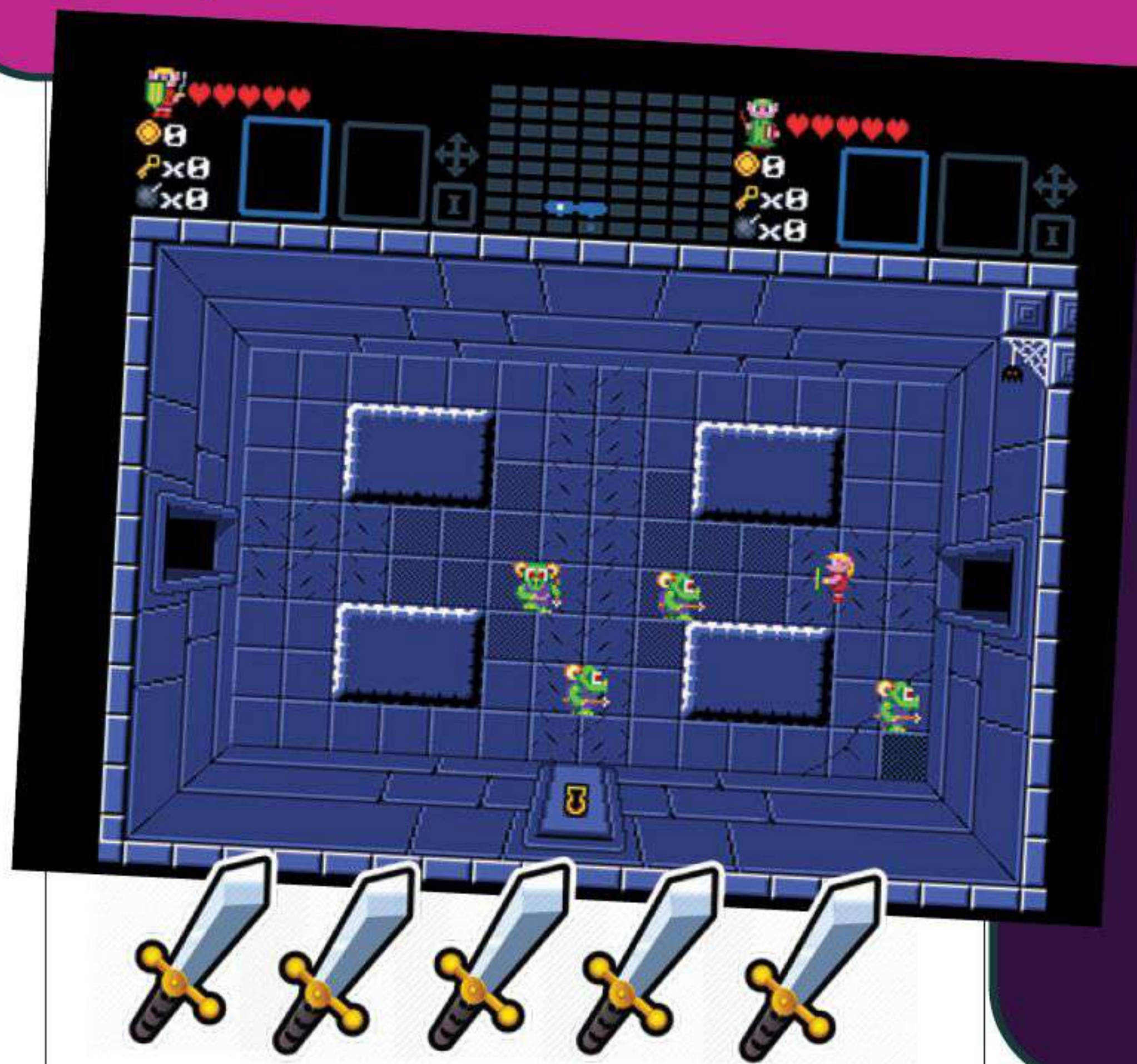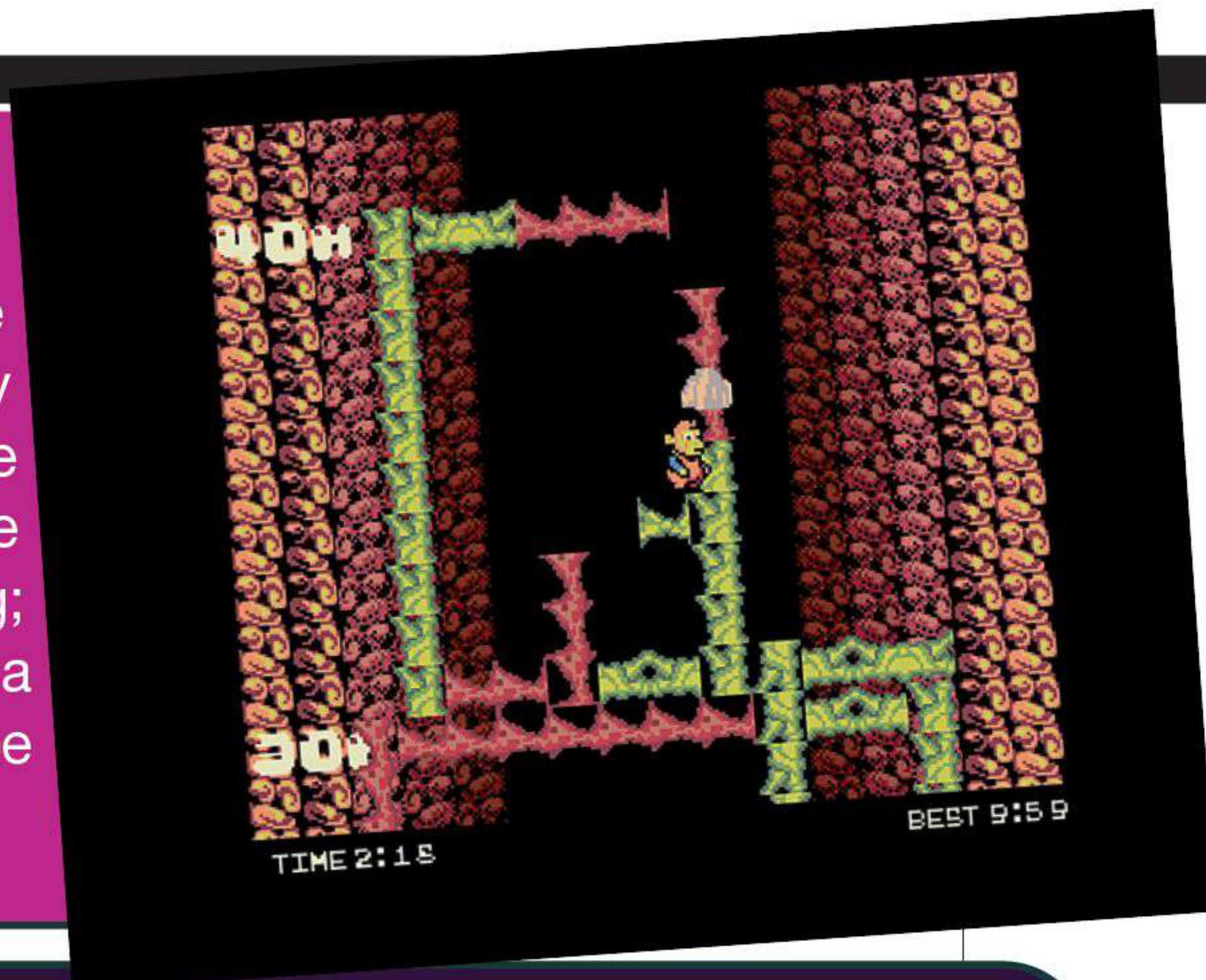
The Last Dungeon - PixelPlop

This has brilliant Legend of Zelda vibes, with cute sprites and detailed backgrounds. Two different characters make for distinct play styles; if you can get a second player to join you, it will be even better. The dungeon is vast, and I love the added touch of what happens if you run away from the entrance. While many gameplay tropes are familiar, there are original touches along the way. It did feel a little bugged in places (more than once I ran out of energy but could keep playing) and needed a little more polish, but I loved it.

Rastan - basementApe

Confession time - I am not the biggest fan of the arcade game Rastan, and I always found it very tricky to get into. But I have to admit that this is a very good conversion, especially since it targets the Amiga 500. The graphics look almost identical and move well, and the sound is pretty impressive, too. There were a few niggles when playing, such as getting used to the way you have to climb ropes, but I did get better the more I played. It's a strong conversion, and a well-made game for the jam.

Declan Rogue Zero - nivrig

Nivrig has excelled himself here, the mix of Rogue-like mechanics and diminutive sprites works really well. The shards being used to attack the boss was a clever idea, and I love the shop for upgrading. The whole game has a lot of personality, and I look forward to the extended game with extra modes. Top work, a sense of humour, and a strong challenge. Definitely worth playing.

Necromantics
PC CD-ROM

effigy ®

MEMOIRS

AMIGA musician Tim Wright shares his memoirs on *Magician's Castle*, a game which never surfaced for the AMIGA but was instead released on the PC under a different name.

As I was considering which music from my healthy back catalogue to talk about this time, a recollection of some words of praise from Mike Clarke, also a musician at Psygnosis, popped into my head.

One day back in 1993, Mike wandered into my studio and asked how the music was going for a game called *Magician's Castle*. I played him a few tracks, and he said, "You know, that's possibly the best music you've ever composed for an AMIGA game". If Mike ever praises your work, you know he's genuinely impressed.

Given the timely reminder of this memory, I thought it was a good enough reason to tell you more about this game and my association with it.

Magician's Castle is an unreleased AMIGA game that began development in 1993. It was created by a software company called Miracle Games, who were at one time based in an office above a shop on Chester Street in St. Asaph, North Wales*. After being dropped by Psygnosis due to lack of progress (or at least that's what I was told), its release date of April 1994 sadly came and went.

It turns out that *Magician's Castle* finally saw the light of day, after being converted to run on the IBM PC under the new name *Necromantics*, and released in 1996 by Effigy Software.

Interestingly, after doing some digging around, not only did I find an interview with the original *Magician's Castle* developers in issue 67 of The One magazine, but I also found a part playthrough of the PC version. Someone had told me in the dim and distant past that they'd seen the game on a Covermount Disc for PC, but until today I'd never seen the PC version in action.

Looking around at various game history and game credits websites that referred to *Necromantics*, I also noticed that I'd not been credited for the music and sound effects. In some cases, it was a company called PC Music – folks from Liverpool who I actually know very well. Not sure how they were picked up as the composers? They did indeed do various audio jobs for Psygnosis back in the day, so maybe there's the link.

00:02:10

Bizarrely, in Amiga Action issue 53, there's a first-page advertisement for loads of AMIGA games provided by a games club called Special Reserve. One of those games is *Magician's Castle*, and it's priced at £20.49!

Another odd thing connected with my music for *Magician's Castle* is my very own album, *Strix Memoria Volume One*. Yes, volume one. I did anticipate doing another three albums over time, so maybe I'll still get around to that? It's been a decade since it was released, but never say never! However, getting back to my point… from the 100s of tunes I composed for games on the AMIGA, the way the tracks on this album were chosen was by public vote. I created MP3 files and posted them online with a voting system in place. The results really surprised me. Because not one, but THREE *Magician's Castle* tunes were voted for quite highly, and so they ended up on the album. It baffled me that music that was never released - well not at that point - was chosen for up-mixing by my fans? But who knows, maybe people had been playing *Necromantics* and heard it there, or more likely, they simply just liked the music.

Nevertheless, it's uplifting to know that people still listen to the original AMIGA versions. For example, on radio. cvgm.net the last play of the Title Music was 2 weeks ago (August 2023), and the average rating is 4.3/5, with votes from all around the world. Gives me a warm glow inside!

I also downloaded the game from an abandonware website, and they still had the AMIGA MOD (tracker) files in a folder within the game, readily accessible should you simply change the file extension from MDO to MOD. And in there were my original comments, with some dry humour.

I won't delve into the mechanics of the compositions in this article for a change, I'll just sign off by saying that as usual, the memory constraints were tough as was often the case, but even so, I managed to create some music that employed more traditional instruments and less electronic style. It seems it was appreciated… much like my piano work for the game *Agony* on the AMIGA. In fact, thinking back, maybe that was what I was best known for? *Leander*, *Shadow of the Beast II* & *III* – all quite ethnic when it comes to most of the instrumentation and the final pieces.

AMIGA PARTY CULTURE

By Judge Drokk

Welcome to the 11th chapter of possibly the deepest-ever examination of the Amiga demo party scene. Born of illegal activities in secret locations, where people with strange pseudonyms charged a small fee for as much fun as you could carry home. A far cry from the party events of today. How have these happenings evolved over the last three decades, and more importantly, how have they survived? I'm Judge Drokk, a party organizer myself back in 1992, and I'd love to find out.

The Amiga is a survivor. Defying the end of Commodore, the rise of PC, the aging user base, erosion of the demoscene, and the natural desire for the 'next big thing'.
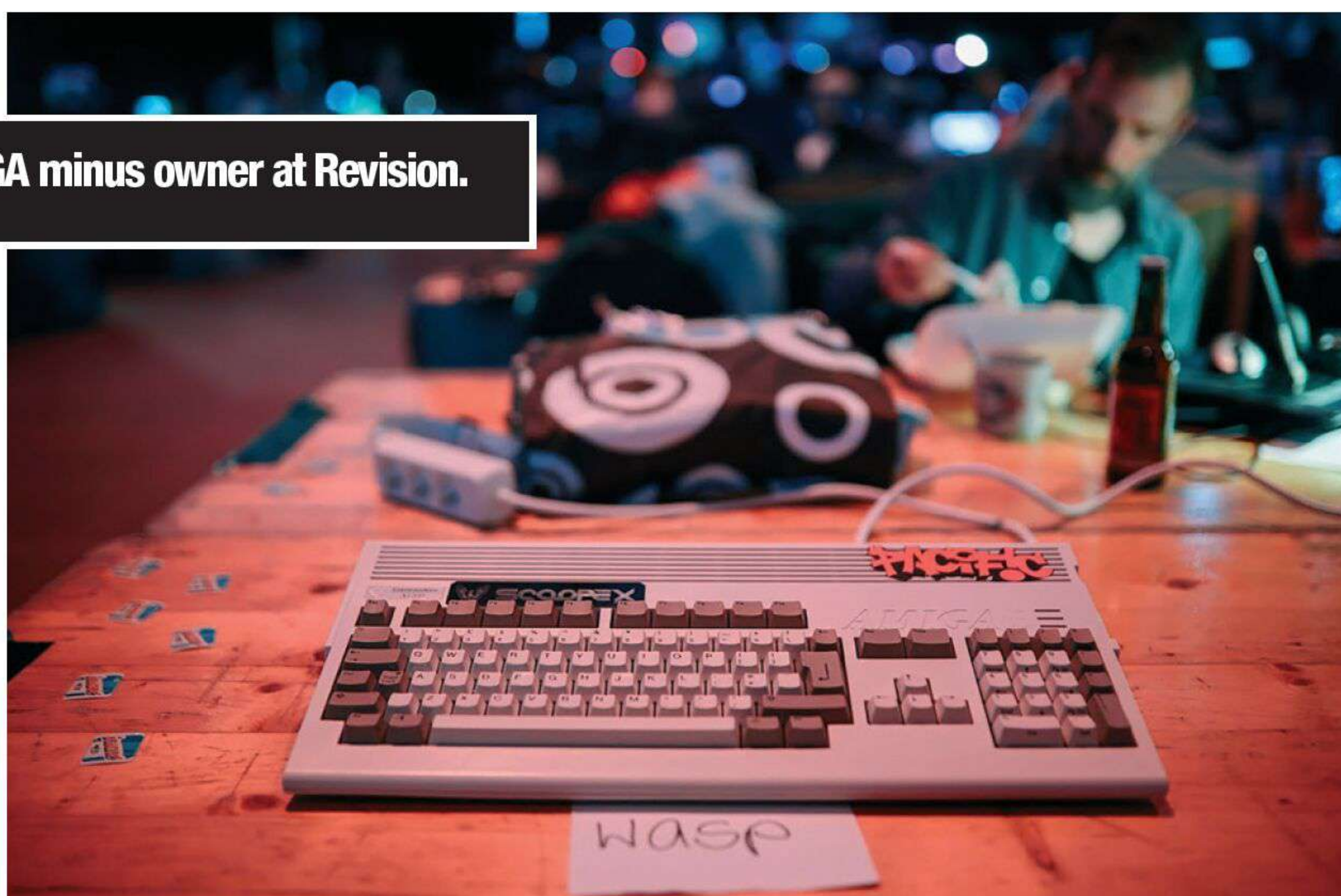
Yet here we are, still using Amiga, though not always on the original hardware (not that you'd notice). The demoscene is still here, and now more diverse than ever, but you may still spot some of the teams you would find in a top-ten group chart from thirty years ago. Parties are still here too, evolving from legendary events such as The Party, from Crystal-Silents-Anarchy, onto 'The Gathering'. This evolved from an Amiga-centric event held inside a school in the early 1990s to an occasion of gargantuan proportions, held in an Olympic arena and visited by over 5,000 attendees over the course of five days.

Of course, the core focus changed with the times. The Gathering became a huge LAN party, at one time battling for a world record for the fastest broadband connection at 200 gigabits. The demoscene was becoming quietly forgotten in favour of gaming. Many from the traditional sceners preferred 'Breakpoint', a pure demoscene party held in Germany: a much-loved event, with corporate sponsors such as Nvidia and Intel. The loss of key sponsors brought the annual Breakpoint event to an end, but a new event followed called 'Revision', an event which has proved resilient over the last decade and is now the largest pure demoscene event in the world.

AMIGA minus owner at Revision.

Andreas "Styx" Schilling

Control desk at REVISION.

JD - Could you describe 'Revision' in less 50 words or less?

STYX - 4-day non-stop, creative hacking event, that has its roots in the home computing era of the early 80s. We bring computer artists from all around the world together to meet, exchange their knowledge, party, make friends, and compete in a wide range of multimedia competitions, including real-time graphics programming over music and photography.

JD - What do you think is the **single biggest evolution in a world-class 'demo-party' such as Revision since the Wild-West approach of the late 1980s and early 1990s?**
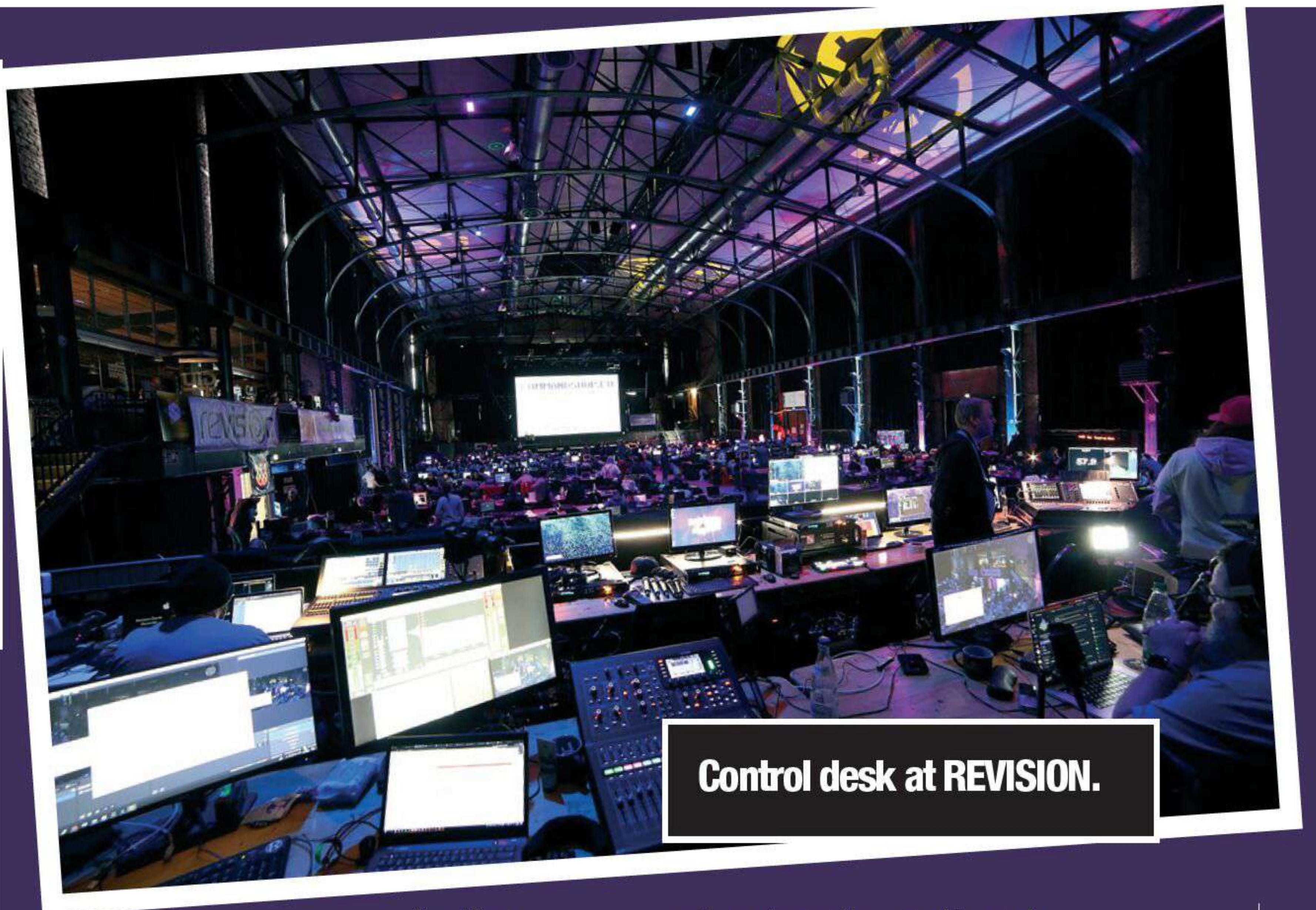
STYX - Providing a stage for a much wider audience while still keeping the scene spirit alive. It requires a certain level of professionalism, cooperating with multiple organisations from inside and outside the demoscene, such as art schools, cultural departments, and businesses. Also, trying (and sometimes failing) with some innovations in regards to the competition lineup.
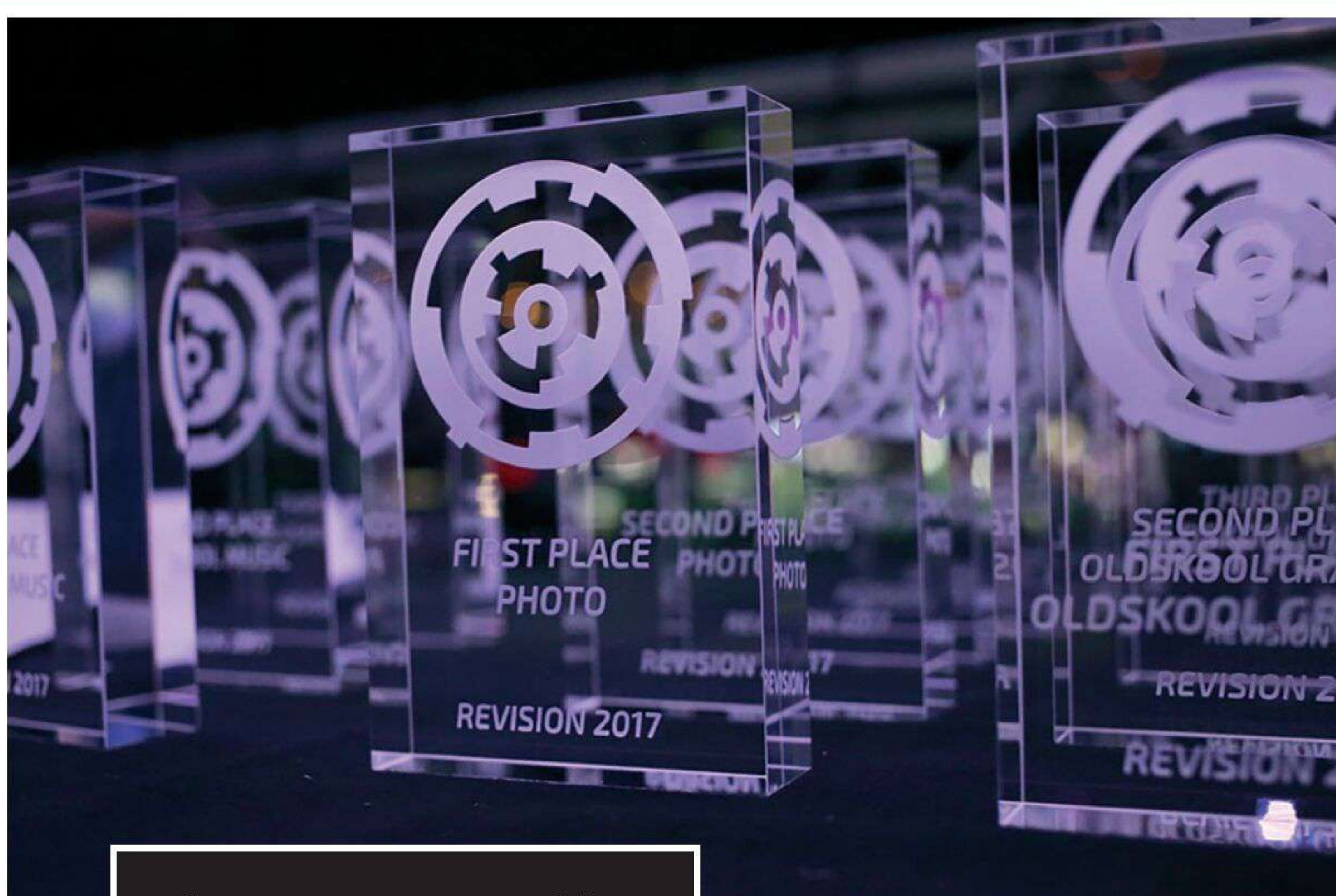
JD - What is involved in planning and staging an event on the epic scale of Revision?

STYX - For some from the core team it's close to a year-round activity, including wrapping up the past event, finishing all the financial tasks, and often just discussing new ideas, party themes or the like.
    Tasks usually begin around Autumn, and things get intense around December. During this planning period, we get in touch with sponsors, handle changes in local politics or service providers, and, of course, to the party as such, where larger parts of the team are involved in discussing ideas. The grunt work
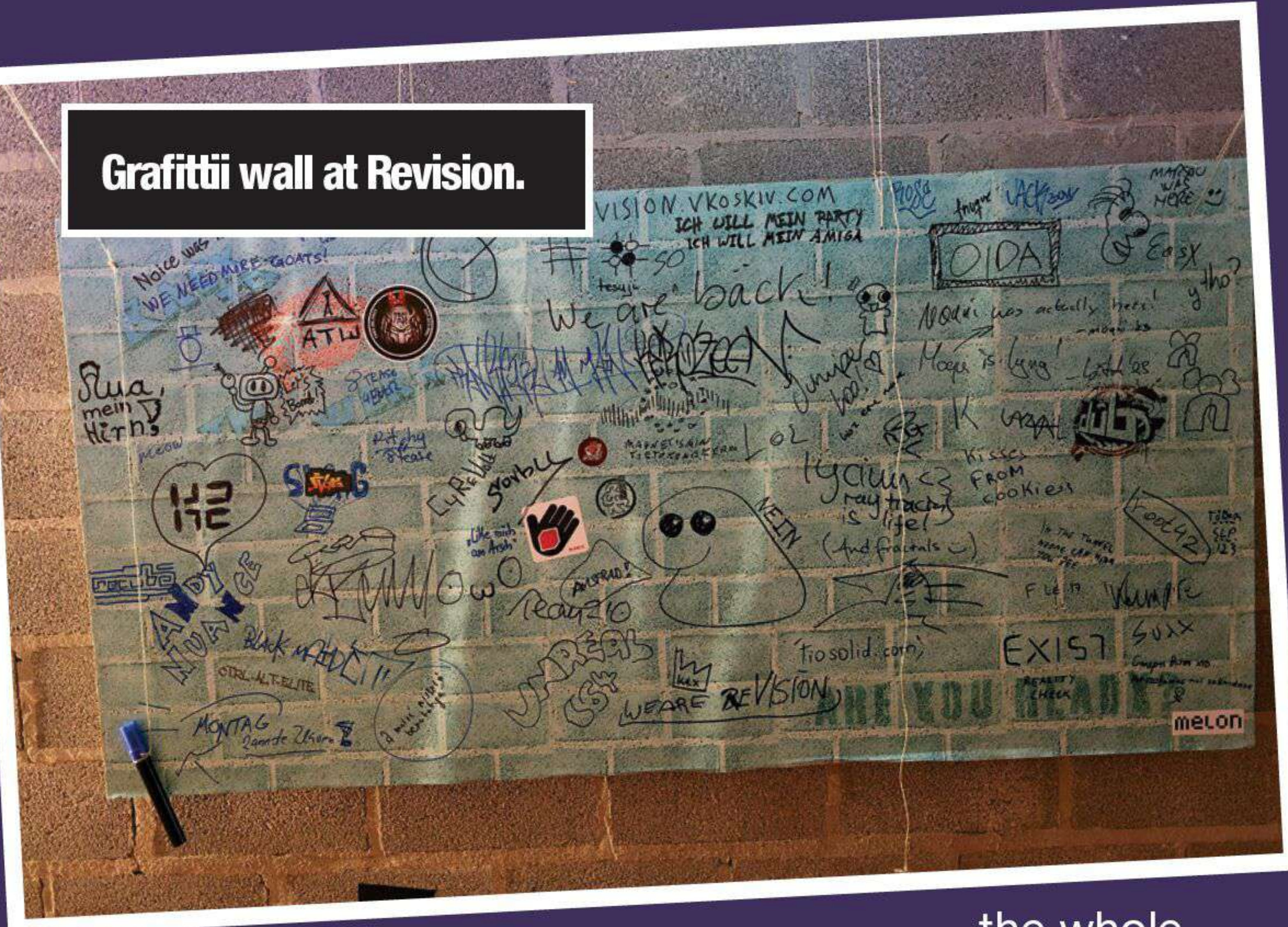

Winners awards at Revision.

Grafittii wall at Revision.

(ordering material or services which remain pretty much unchanged throughout the years and just require "a single phone call") is done in the first two or three months of the new year.

Until now, most of the planning work is done by the core team of roughly 10-15 people. We start with irregular meetings, which are switched to weekly meetings by December. Staging of the actual event starts the weekend before the party. The main organisers meet in person for the final crunch, when we try to fix the last-minute issues with the venue owner, service providers, rental companies, etc. Also, loads of the tiny physical tasks are performed, like printing info signs, internal documents, packing the material our association owns, and that is stored in an organiser's basement, etc.

Tuesday before the party, all main organisers and team leads (and also the largest part of the whole team) start arriving at the venue, and the actual build-up starts in the early afternoon. This runs throughout the next days close to 24h/day, and ends exactly with the doors opening in the early afternoon on Good Friday.

During the build-up also, all of the team members arrive and help building the event. At this point in time we are usually 70-80 people, which, of course, also run the actual event later.

JD - When the pandemic restrictions were announced, was there ever a moment when the team thought that things might never be the same again?

STYX - Each individual team member experienced and handled the pandemic differently, but as the main organisers, we tried to have an aligned and realistic view of the situation as much as possible, especially in early 2020, when knowledge about the virus was limited. After having morphed Revision into a purely online event, within weeks and some time to think about everything in a slower pace, there surely were many moments when we thought things might never be the same again.

Later, alongside the good news about vaccinations being successfully developed, we learned that events in closed, badly ventilated rooms are the best way to transmit this airborne virus, and we realised that a 4-day demoparty is pretty much the worst kind of event you could think of in terms of COVID.

With many of us being in the demoscene for way more than 20 years, a certain kind of image has burnt in, how a "real" demoparty looks like, and any deviation from that felt wrong when thinking about it. This fuelled some fears that the "normal" way of things might never return. Luckily, with the first on-site demoparties with some restrictions and measures starting again after a while, we also got our confidence back that it is just a matter of time...

Next time, I seek to find out exactly how things have changed, speak to a party sponsor, and ask if people are really ready to party again like it's the 1990s.

STARGLIDER 2

AMIGA
All Models
Z3043

by ARGONAUT SOFTWARE

Mit Deutscher
Anleitung
Z4001

Welcome to the next instalment of the ZZAP! Amiga Files, where we focus on one game, telling its story as revealed throughout the pages of the world's most fabulous Commodore magazine. From reviews to marketing, tips, and more, Graeme Mason delves into the files to discover everything we said about a particular game.

In this issue, he tackles Rainbird's stunning sci-fi shoot-'em-up, Starglider 2.

The Game

The Egrons are back! Having been sent packing by heroes Jaysan and Katra in the first game, the all-conquering Imperial Prator is building a powerful laser on the nearby planet of Millway. Once constructed, this weapon will lay waste to the surface of Novenia, giving the Novenians no option but to destroy it before it becomes operation-al. Join Jaysan and Katra as they hop into a prototype police-cruiser and assemble a neutron bomb to destroy the Egron menace once and for all!

The Advert

Veteran videogames artist Steve Weston created Starglider 2's advert. Its central spacecraft dominates the image, beautifully designed and reminiscent of the work of Weston's peer, Chris Foss. The inky black depths of space are particularly well-rendered, making this one of his finest pieces.

The Review

With little warning, Starglider 2 landed in issue 42 of ZZAP! AMIGA, stunning our reviewers into maniacal jibbering wrecks [no change there, then – Ed], and one person was especially enthused by Argonaut's crowning achievement. "Right from first seeing the absolutely beautiful title screen, I knew this was going to be something special," gushed Maff Evans. "Starting up the game proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that this is what all Amiga owners have been waiting for – it's the most amazing home computer game I've ever seen!" Steady on there, old chap, and Gordon Houghton was on hand to lend more measured thoughts. "If by now you haven't got the message: GO AND BUY STARGLIDER 2, IT'S AMAZING!" Even Rainbird's huge price tag of £24.95 didn't deter our reviewers. "£25 seems a paltry sum to pay for a classily packaged and perfectly programmed shoot-'em up," concluded Paul Glancey.
Surely Starglider 2 would score highly in the final verdict?

The Verdict

PRESENTATION 96%
Brilliant demo mode, useful James Follett novella and loads of other wundy stuff.

GRAPHICS 95%
Unbelievably good 3D with a large array of well designed objects. The realism is superb . . .

SOUND 98%
Extremely atmospheric effects create an incredible sense of 'being there'.

HOOKABILITY 93%
There *is* a lot to learn, but boy do you want to learn it!

LASTABILITY 97%
It'll keep you occupied for weeks and weeks and . . .

OVERALL 98%
A unanimous decision in the ZZAP! office: the best Amiga game yet.

Well, yes. Starglider 2 registered 90%+ scores in every category, with the lowest being 93% for Hookability. Its stunning graphics earned it 95%, with one more percentage point for Presentation, its demo mode and the James Follett novella helping enormously in this respect. Then, we gave an astonishing 97% to Lastability and 98% to Sound: "Extremely atmospheric effects create an incredible sense of 'being there'" we wisely noted. An overall score of 98% seemed entirely appropriate, as did the final comment: "The best Amiga game yet."

Blasting into the Charts...Eventually

Amazingly, Starglider 2 failed to chart for several months after our review. Why? Because we didn't let readers vote on their favourite Amiga games! Boo! Fortunately, we'd seen sense by issue 45. "ATTENTION ALL AMIGA OWNERS," we announced boldly. "In a couple of issues from now, we're going to be starting up an Amiga chart – and it all depends on what games YOU vote for." We waited with bated breath for issue 47 and… no chart. After waiting ANOTHER month, we finally got an Amiga chart, albeit with only ten entries compared to 20 for the C64. There, sitting proudly at the summit, was Starglider 2, beating off the likes of Elite, Speedball, and Rocket Ranger to claim the top spot in our inaugural Amiga chart. The Rainbird game dropped to number four in issue 49 and stayed there the following month, before slipping out in issue 51.

Amiga top 10

1. Starglider 2
2. Elite
3. Pacmania
4. Speedball
5. Rocket Ranger
6. Buggy Boy
7. Interceptor
8. Bombuzal
9. Operation Wolf
10. Captain Blood

79 69   0001   000000

N

Danger! Mine Detected:5543

Atari ST vs Amiga

now we find just as many releases on the Amiga as on the ST. Usually we find, however, that use of graphics and sound is more impressive on the Amiga than the Atari (but not in all cases).

Recently, we ran a side-by-side test of the Amiga and ST versions of *Starglider 2*, comparing speed and playability of both. It turned out that the ST version ran everso slightly faster, probably due to the way in which the graphics are drawn, needing quite a lot of processor power to calculate the 3D positions. However, the general consensus of opinion in the ZZAP! office was that the Amiga version was more atmospheric, due to the amazing sound and more subtle shading, and subsequently more playable.

For more software appraisals on the Amiga, you'll have to read ZZAP! won't you? (subscriptions still available) . .

Comparisons between the Atari ST and Amiga versions of Starglider 2 became inevitable as the old playground wars resurfaced. Issue 43's feature on the Amiga focused on this, even running a side-by-side test. "It turned out that the ST version ran everso slightly faster," we announced to hushes of amazement. "Probably due to the way in which graphics are drawn, needing quite a lot of processing power to calculate the 3D positions." Fortunately, we came down on the side of the Amiga version overall, thanks to its superior sound and shading.

Tips

Starglider 2 fans got a sweet three-page guide to the Argonaut game in issue 44. Created by Maff and Paul, the tips included an impressive computer-generated map and pointers to the locations of valuable items. Two issues later, readers had even more help for the epic space game: thanks to Philip Johnson of Stebbing, we revealed a cheat code that granted unlimited shield, fuel, and weapons. Now there was no excuse not to kick some Egron ass!

A Benchmark

Starglider 2's brilliance, relatively early in the Amiga's lifetime, would resonate throughout future issues of ZZAP! AMIGA. "The technical achievement of Freescape is obviously somewhat diminished on the 16-bit machines, where solid 3-D of the Starglider II-type is increasingly commonplace," noted Stuart Wynne in our review of Incentive's Driller follow-up, Dark Side. "Then, of course, there's the 16-bit speed of the graphics – flying around with the jetpack is much more realistic now, though not quite up to Starglider II speeds." Almost a year after our stunning review of Starglider 2, it continued to be a benchmark game for Amiga fans, developers, and our reviewers.

Final Thoughts

Starglider 2 is a true classic of Amiga gaming, blending those elusive tenets of supreme technical brilliance and well-thought-out and designed gameplay. It remains one of the computer's finest achievements, deserving of a place in everyone's top ten, and one of our exclusive band of 98% 16-bit games in ZZAP! AMIGA.

運命の城
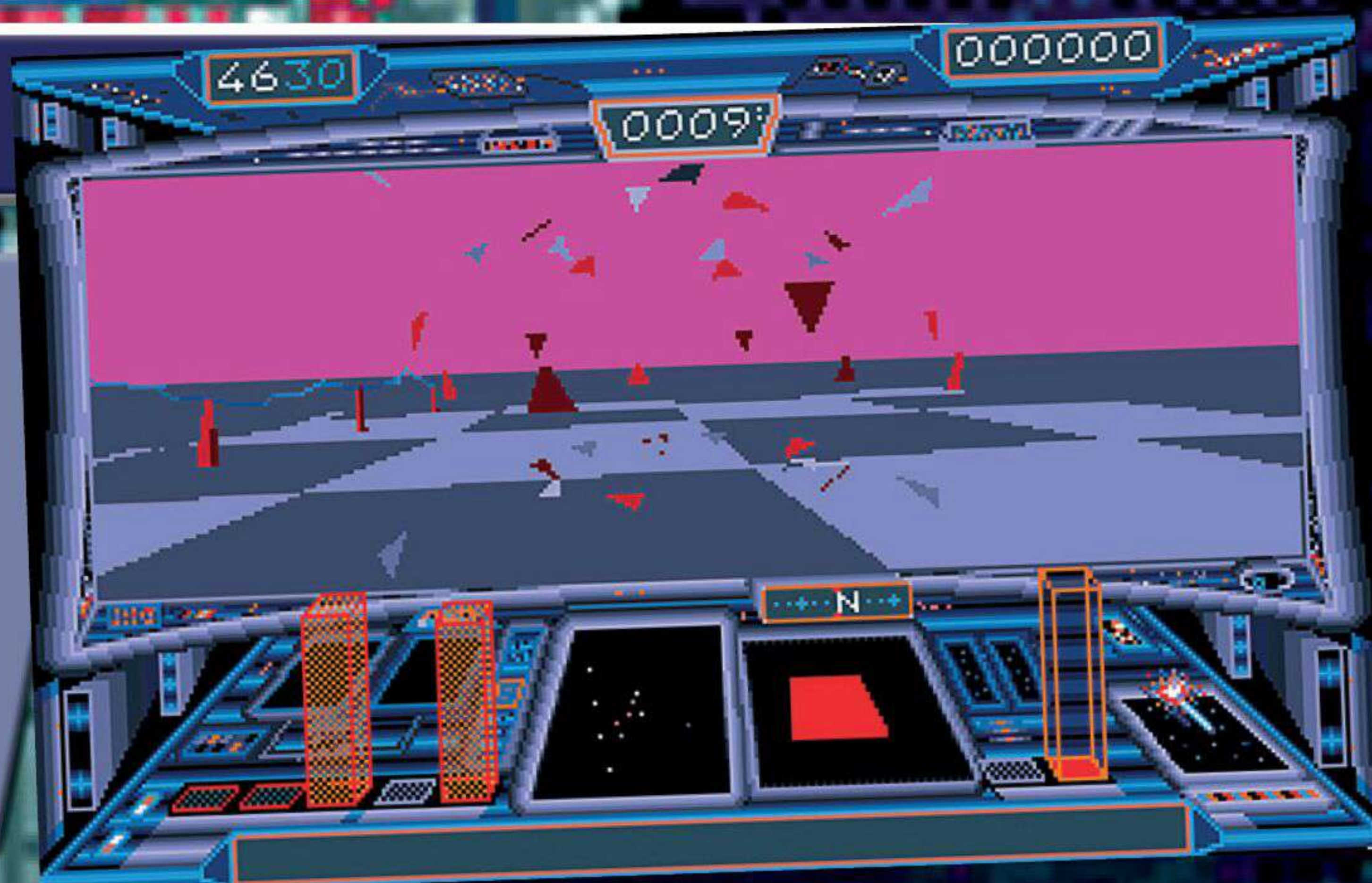
DOOMED CASTLE
DEMO, MA SOFTWARE

**M.A.Soft - 2023
(Free to download)**

In a castle overlooking the Spanish province of Andalusia, a secret lives. Or rather, is undead - for the doomed castle is playing host to a powerful vampire.

While there is no one from the Belmont family of vampire hunters on hand to take up the challenge, a tall and athletic local hero has picked up his whip, and stands at the castle gates ready to head inside. Fortunately, there are ways to gain strength and extra weapons.

Territory is ever-familiar, with castles full of immense windows, and eery forests being your backdrops.

Whipping statues and candles provides power-ups and extra hearts (to give more ammunition for the secondary weapon or heal damage). Watch out for the hordes of monsters patrolling the levels, find the keys to unlock gates, and check the walls to see if there is anything hidden.

This is currently a demo of the final game, featuring a single level. It is reviewed here to encourage the programming team and hopefully secure interest in the project to continue.

Game Info

This demo of the game finished second at the Homebrew Game Competition during the Posadas 2023 party in Andalusia, Spain - behind the winner Absolute Zero, also reviewed in this issue. In fact, the original plans for this title reach back to a thread on the English Amiga Board from 2011.

The game was programmed by Miguel Ángel Jiménez Santana of M.A. Soft, with graphics by Toni Galvez and music by Martin Eriksson. The game was developed with Blitz Basic 2, Tiled, Promotion, Personal Paint, Gimp, Protracker, Renoise and Octamed 4.

It seems that Castlevania is very much in style for Amiga developers right now. This feels very similar to the original, and the only letdown is that it is a single level. The graphics have a brighter feel and some nice sprites, while the backgrounds are good. I enjoyed the music and sound effects, although the controls needed a bit more polishing. And just as I was getting into the gameplay, I found myself at the end. Not so much doomed as cut short in the prime of its life. With further development, this could be good, but you can't swing a whip these days without hitting a similar game...

Initially, this grabs your attention due to the colourful and detailed pixel art backdrops and sprites.

The sounds are decent, albeit nothing jaw-dropping. Playing the game reveals some simplistic animation sequences and some unpredictable responsiveness to controls, but on the whole, I found it rather enjoyable. Maybe that's because I can't get enough of Castlevania clones, but this has enough charm of its own to keep you interested and wanting more, once you play through the single level. Hopefully, more levels will be developed soon and an updated version released. I, for one, will be keen to pick it up again and give it some more of my time.

PRESENTATION 77%
Nice intro picture and menu.

GRAPHICS 79%
A warm, bright palette gives an interesting twist to the familiar castle scenes.

SOUND 75%
Good tunes and decent FX,

HOOKABILITY 74%
One or two control concerns as you slip off platforms and try to activate secondary weapons.

LASTABILITY 51%
Unfortunately, not much blood will be spilt given there is only one level.

OVERALL 70%

If this can rise from the grave and be completed, there will be plenty to get your teeth into.

The SCORPION Segment

Scorpion is a fast and flexible game-making engine for the Commodore AMIGA computers. In this regular series, we get the latest news and thoughts from the creator, Erik Hogan, as well as insights from some of its most experienced developers.
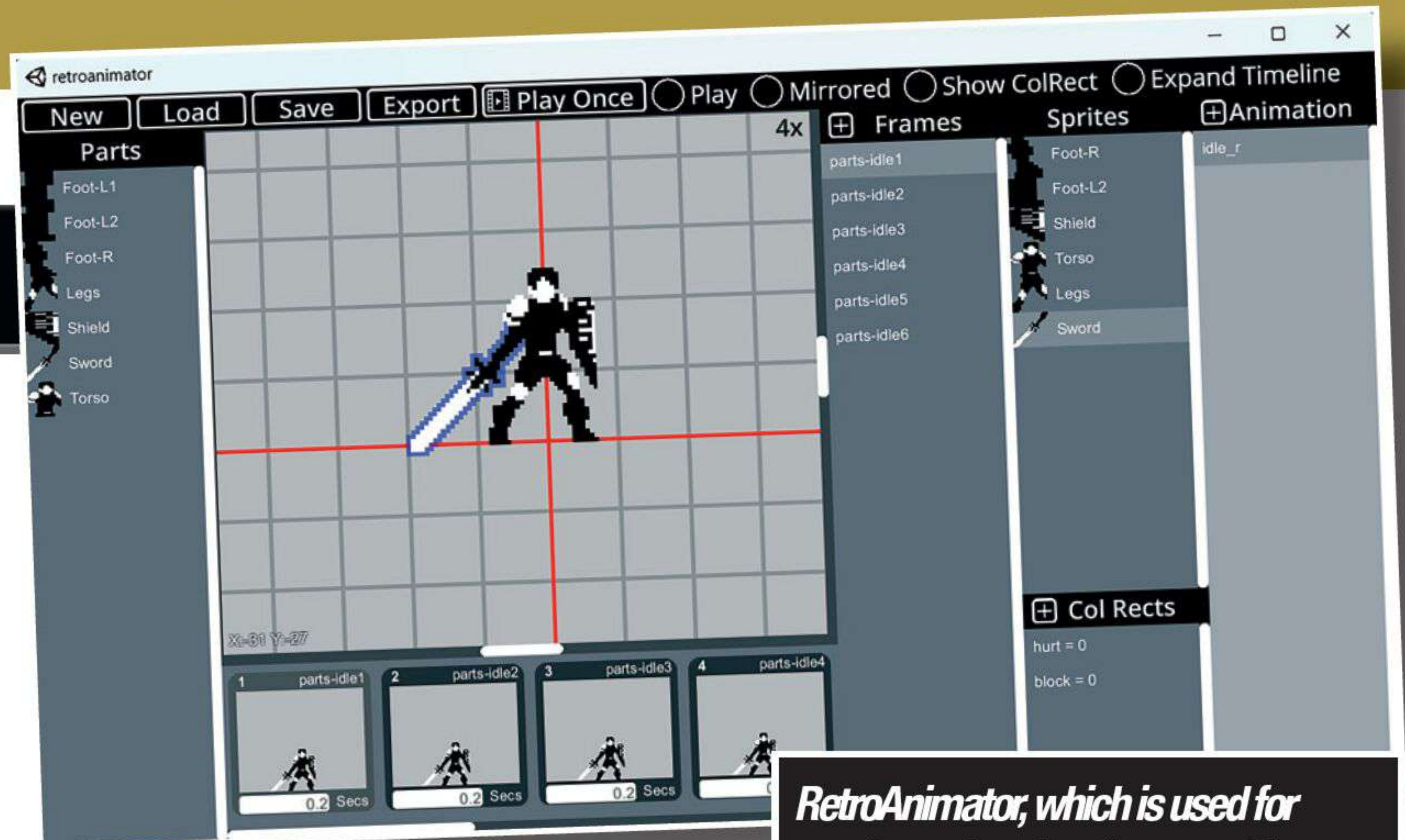
Engine Tuning with Erik

RetroAnimator, which is used for making animations in Metro Siege.

One of the largest updates to the latest version of Scorpion Engine is support of the *RetroAnimator* animation toolkit.

This is the same toolkit that has been used to create large and fluid animations for the incredible-looking Amiga beat-em-up, *Metro Siege*. Now those same sorts of animations can also be implemented within Scorpion Engine games.

Development of this feature was sponsored by BitBeamCannon who, along with PixelGlass and Enable Software, are the creators of *Metro Siege* itself.

For Amiga specifically, we've given the CDTV and CD32 some well-overdue love. CD music is supported for both platforms, and export to CDTV or CD32 is supported from the editor itself. With a few clicks, you can generate a CUE file that contains instructions for a burner to burn the data ISO and the audio WAV/MP3s.

The Mega Drive side has also received some upgrades, such as for the vertical column scrolling feature of the VDP.

DragonBox.de provided us with some flashable cartridges to help develop a new feature that allows for one-click export, making it easier to self-publish your own game. In addition to all of that, there have also been some major improvements in performance to the engine itself. Scorpion has been written in Blitz Basic, but an increasing amount of the core engine code is being rewritten in pure ASM (particularly performance-sensitive code for rendering and collision detection), bringing the fluidity gradually closer to what you might expect from a fully native game.

Scorpion Engine 2023.3 Added Features

- RetroAnimator animation system.
- CDTV/CD32 export.
- CD music export on Amiga.
- Column Scrolling on Mega Drive.
- Major performance improvements.

Project Focus : Wonderboy III

A follow-up to *Wonderboy* was always a plan, after the original port was so well received. With the second arcade game already ported to AMIGA by Activision, it was a choice between *Dragon's Curse* or *Monster Lair.* I chose the latter, not because it's a better game particularly, but because it was going to be more linear and therefore a touch easier to port, well that was the theory anyway.

Work proper started in late 2022, where earok had recently introduced sprite wrapping to the Scorpion Engine. This requires the AGA chipset to implement, so have taken the decision to go down this route. This has meant memory requirements are much less an issue also. The extra depth and closeness to the arcade version this gives has made the choice worthwhile, I believe.

While still in its very early development stage, the core engine of the game is up and running and quite playable. Have introduced the powerup system, this is still a little rough, but the basics are set. The toughest nut to crack so far was the energy bar system. In Scorpion, you use panels and graphic elements to display energy bars and score counters. Custom logic code was required to shift the energy bar colours from blues/greens down to red, and eventually no health. Am really happy with how this turned out, despite missing a couple of colour shades, which does not affect gameplay whatsoever.

Have already placed five rounds into the game, all music (courtesy of JMD) is done, and also had help from EAB members with some of the more awkward sprite rips.

The next big tasks are bosses and camera scroll setups. I have crudely made two boss attack patterns, but the level 2 boss snake is going to require some massive thought to implement! It may end up being more clunky than the arcade version, but Scorpion does change quickly, and the various challenges may get easier over time.

There is no set date for release, it is a very slow process, but do hope to have some kind of pre-alpha taster demo of some of the work so far, within a few months.

Acidbottle
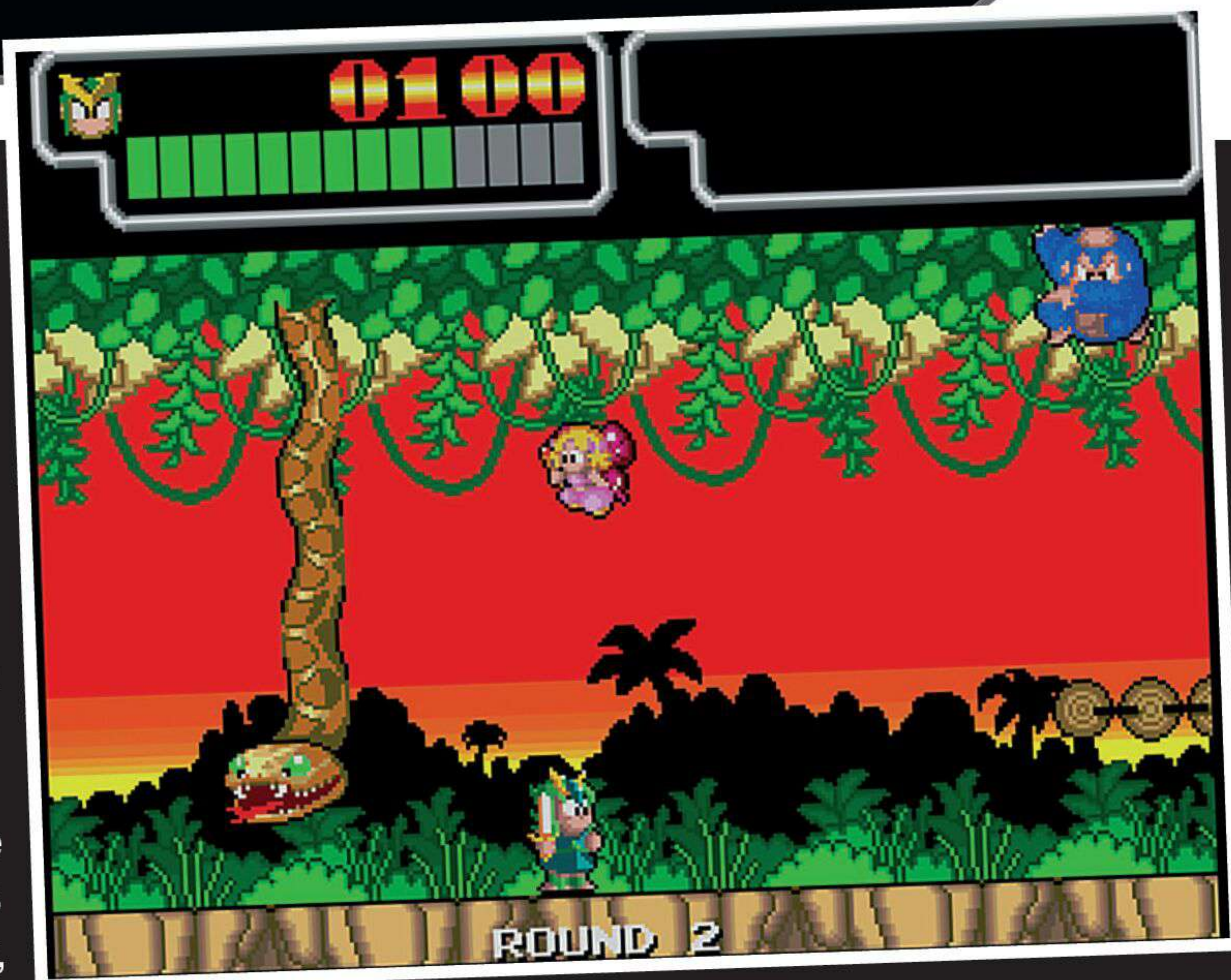
Developer Diaries with Mixel

In this regular section, Mixel provides some deeper insights into some of the features of Scorpion, and how they are used in his projects. In this issue, he explains 'player states'.

CMO Update

Creeping Me Out: Hex Night (CMO) progress is slow at the moment. Llife is crazy.. I swear I'll get back up to full speed eventually!

Last issue, I concentrated on a boss fight and some enemy behaviour. One of the things I've been working on lately is a new state for one of the playable characters, Anna.

That got me thinking how it's not immediately obvious how this might work to new Scorpion users, so I'll explain.

In many platform games you have various different player states: Maybe a walking/running one.. Possibly a
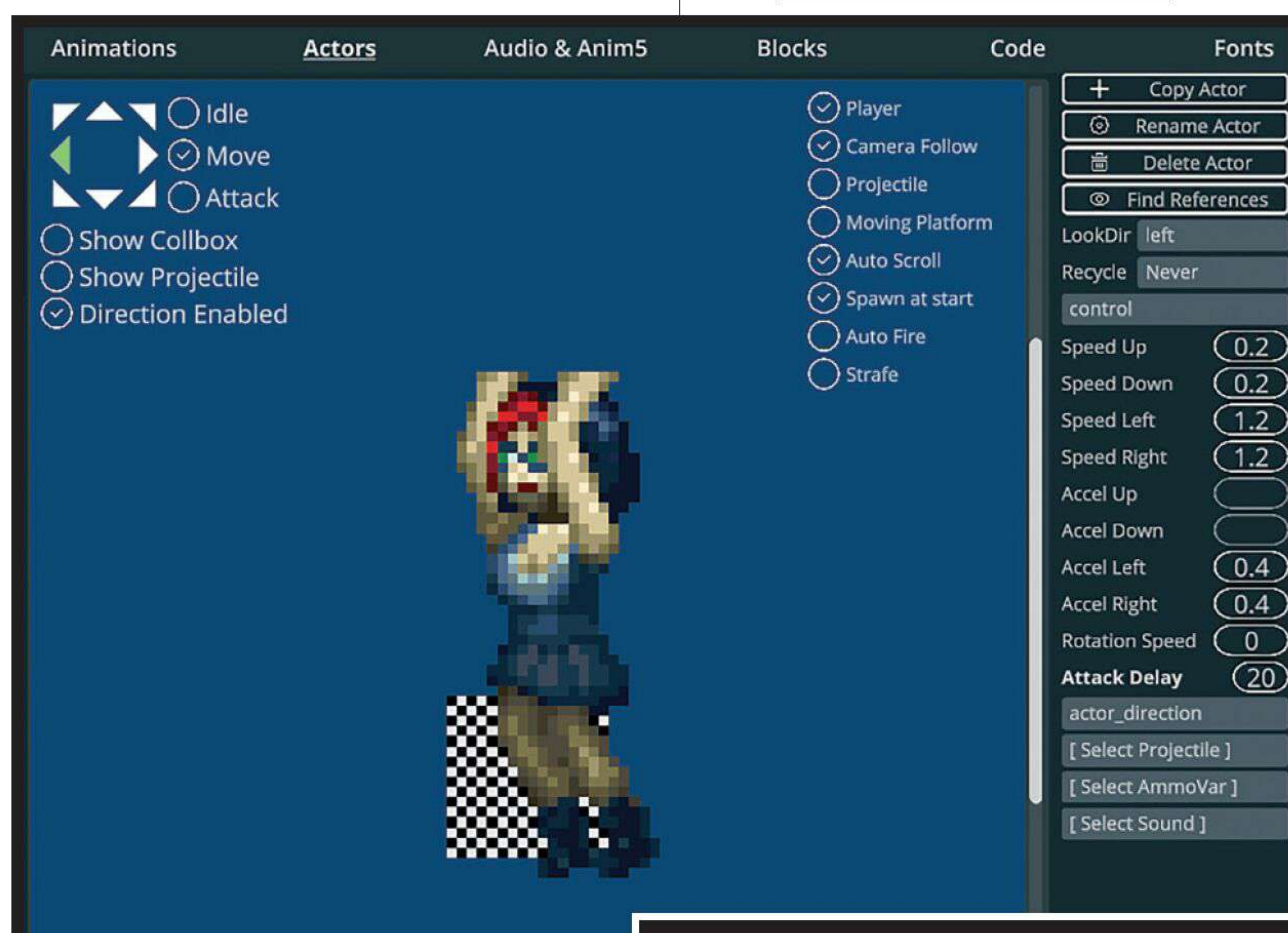
Anna's 'hanging from ceiling' state.

ducking one, even a lying down state in some cases. In a game like CMO I also have swimming, climbing ladders, holding a gun while standing, holding a gun while ducking, climbing along horizontal railings.. Each of these states is, in scorpion terms, its own unique "Actor" - so when the player is ducking they have a different set of properties - you can't walk while ducking for example so the ducking actors have no horizontal speed.

Here's an example (to the left) of the player in an alternate state (ducking on ice - a slippery version of

Ducking on ice (Ed: try saying that after a few beers!)

normal ducking!) Anna's "low kick" functions as a slide attack, which is unique to her. In this screen there's also a penguin in a secondary state. When I hit the penguin it switches from a "walking on platforms" actor into a "flopping around in the air in a big, somewhat random arc" actor, so you can juggle them by punching airborne penguins. As they're different actors at different times you can easily connect a different set of codeblocks to them to make them behave in interesting ways. For example, occasionally the penguins will also lie on their bellies and slide at you extremely fast, while the normal walking penguin will just patrol back and forth. I do this with scheduled dice rolls, as seen in the code

Animations   **Actors**   Audio & Anim5   Blocks   Code   Fonts

- Idle
- Move
- Attack
- Show Collbox
- Show Projectile
- Direction Enabled

- Player
- Camera Follow
- Projectile
- Moving Platform
- Can Ride Platforms
- Auto Scroll
- Spawn at start
- Auto Fire

+ Copy Actor
⚙ Rename Actor
🗑 Delete Actor
👁 Find References

LookDir left
Recycle Never

control_platform_sonyc
Jump Speed   (5.6)
Max Fall Speed   (3)
Speed Left   (2)
Speed Right   (2)
Jump Cancel Speed (0.57)
Gravity   (0.19)
Accel Left   (0.4)
Accel Right   (0.4)
Accel Left Air
Accel Right Air
Jump Height   (82.53)
ffftjump
Attack Delay   (20)
actor_direction
hblast
[Select AmmoVar]

Anna's normal walking state.

example, below.

New Scorpion Features?

The latest feature added to Scorpion that I'm really excited about is CD Audio support for CD32 and CDTV.. This is ideal for me and should speed up my composing drastically, being able to use the software I'm more used to, then recreate as .mod files is a lot easier for me than the other way around!

I'm also incredibly interested in all the recent Megadrive developments.. Though *CMO* would need complete retooling to support the MD, so I won't tinker with that until the Amiga versions are done!

See you next time when I'll hopefully have more new material to show.

```
1    If actor_type == penguin then..
2        Roll dice with 5 sides
3        If dice == 1 then..
4            Set direction for Actor to stop_moving
5            Change Actor to penguinslide. (Do reset movement and do reset animation)
6            Set direction for Actor to resume_moving
7        End condition
8    End condition
9
10   If actor_type == penguinslide then..
11       Roll dice with 4 sides
12       If dice == 1 then..
13           Set direction for Actor to stop_moving
14           Change Actor to penguin. (Do reset movement and do reset animation)
15           Set direction for Actor to resume_moving
16       End condition
17       If dice == 3 then..
18           Set direction for Actor to move_left
19       End condition
20       If dice == 4 then..
21           Set direction for Actor to move_right
22       End condition
23   End condition
```

Scheduled dice rolls in Scorpion's code editor.

CONFESSIONS
of an Amiga Scener

Welcome travellers, once again you find yourself at the sacred confessional. A place of amnesty where scene legends come to recount the stories of the past adventures from an era long since passed. I'm Judge Drokk, founding member of Amiga team Anarchy, and today we rejoin British scene legend, Cosy, for the second part of his tell-all adventures as we break the myths and uncover the past, fact by fact.

JD - Welcome back Cosy. On the subject of disks, you had several of your own compilation-pack series that you would spread by mail to your contacts. They were always full of the latest scene releases as I remember...

COSY - Yeah, I did packs for Magnetic Fields originally. They were simply labelled "M.F presents..", then the same for Digital, just the group name. The 'Dolly Mixture' packs started when I joined Anarchy. Another pack series for Anarchy was the 'Bertie Bassett' collection with the slogan, "One too many and you'll turn Bertie", borrowed from the Bassett's Liquorice-Allsorts adverts. I think the "Dolly" packs were games compilations and the "Bertie"s collection were demos or vice versa, it was so long ago Judge.

JD - Yeah, I remember the Dolly and Bertie packs well, and making a menu system for you. Those pack series began when you left Digital and moved to Anarchy in 1991. What led to you leaving that group?

COSY - I guess we all like to move up the ladder. I never had a fall out with any members from Digital, we were all good friends back then, and still remain that today. When I left Digital, I guess I didn't get to know their up-coming releases etc, as this was kept a secret from me. I know No.5 wasn't happy that I left, but we were still good pals and he respected my decision.

KICK OFF 2 - GIANTS OF EUROPE

Nemesis presents
Kick Off 2 - Giants of Europe
Original supplied by Cosy and Pod
Deprotected by N.O.M.A.D
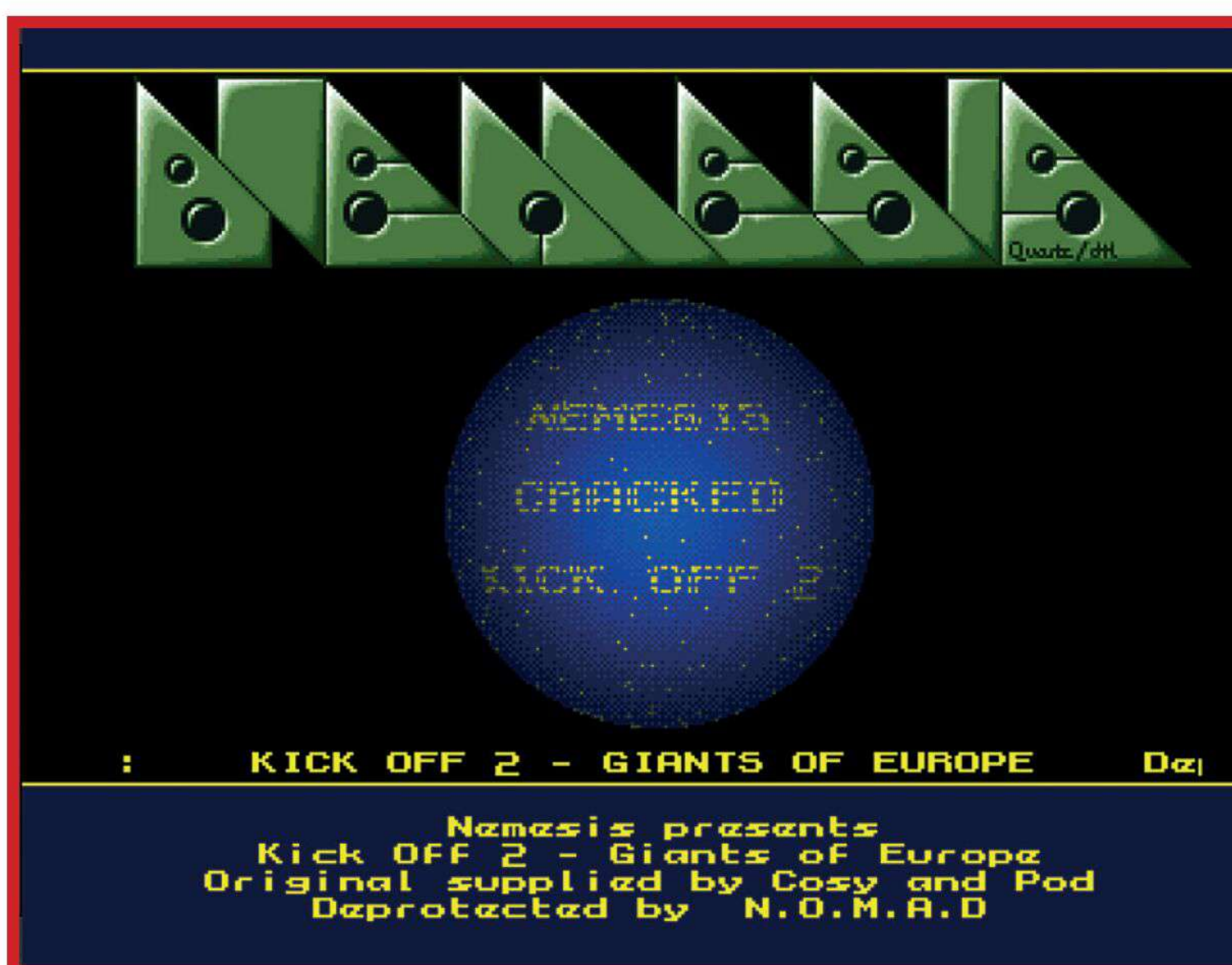
JD - You certainly were moving up the ladder, I remember your packs regularly appearing in the Crusaders 'Eurochart top ten' charts, and hitting number one in the Grapevine chart. Maybe Digital kept their releases a secret from you as they thought you might spill the beans on what they were doing next, to your new group Anarchy?

Being an Amiga modem-trader, you would always have the latest 0-day old cracks and other releases. For those who you supplied to, that had no software to offer you in return, how did they give something back - Dolly Mixtures? Stamps? Disks?

COSY - I would ask them to send postage in stamps as the Royal Mail

had caught on with the 'invisible tape' stamps and they would arrive with a pen marked scribbled through, so I couldn't use them again. I would ask my contacts to send 20 discs, with 10 kept for myself, and 10 being returned back to them. I would ask them to stick a little note

in the parcel saying what they had last time, just in case I sent duplicates back. This was their way of helping me out too. I wouldn't ask for anything, as they turned out to be good friends. Many still are today, thanks to good old Facebook.

JD - You left Anarchy (but still made compilations for the group) in early 1992, as you moved over to cracking groups where you became an integral part of several of the World's biggest teams. One of these was Fairlight, but you weren't happy there. Why was this, and where did you go after that?

COSY - Fairlight was a very respectable group to be in, but they were so demanding and would
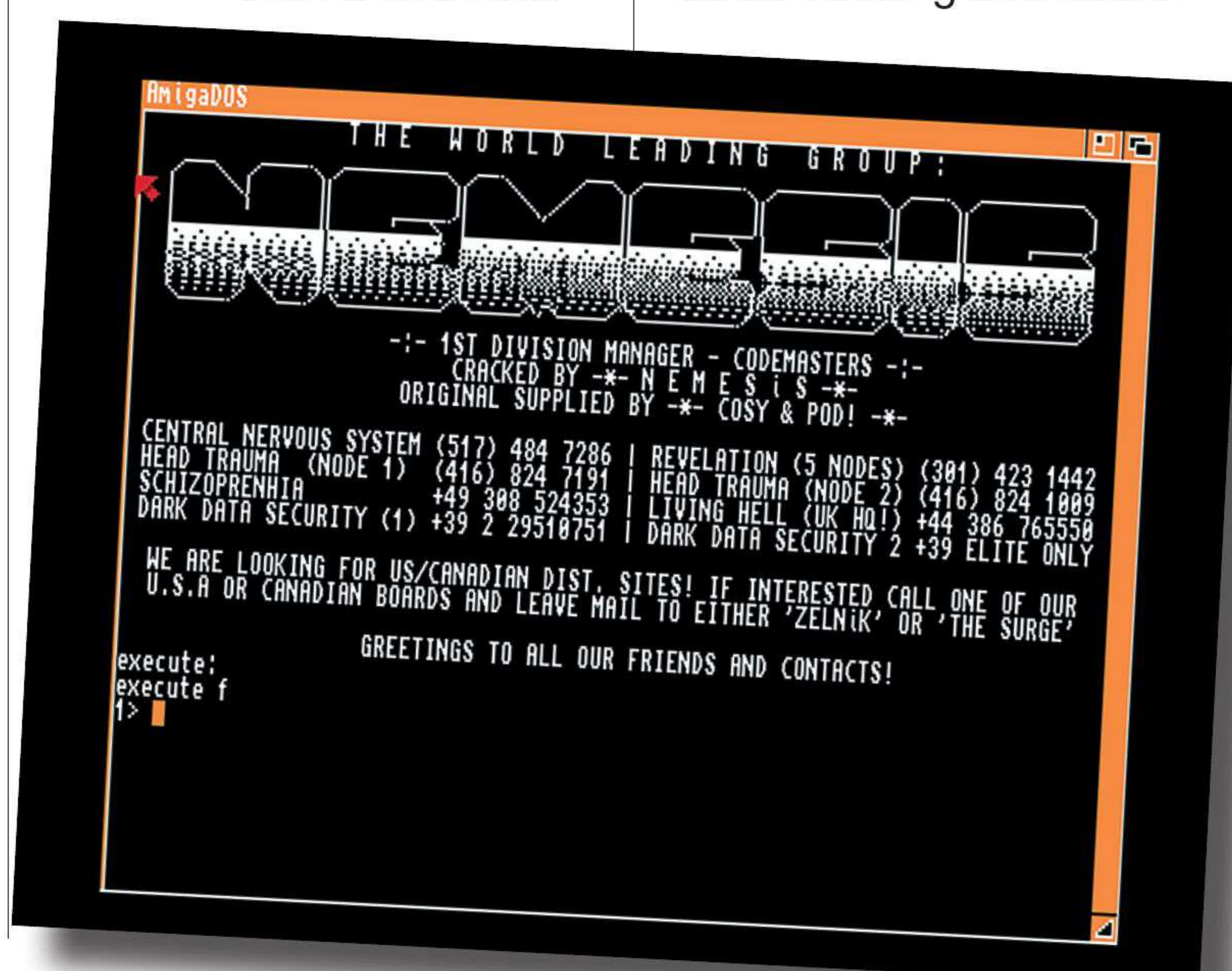
pressure me to get the latest originals out. They'd ring me constantly through the day and night, and if I didn't do what they wanted they would turn nasty. I hated the pressure. They would have me sitting on other cracking groups BBSs, just to see if they had beaten us on the releases. I left for those reasons.

JD - Understandable, as that would suck the fun out of the scene for anyone. Later you joined Quartex for a short time, and following that you became a big part of the new cracking team 'Nemesis'. Your role was an original supplier. As an Amiga scener, getting cracks in the mail before the release date

was great. How did you get hold of originals before the shop release date, and for those who have no idea of just how organised and efficient cracking-groups were, can you explain the process of acquiring an original before release and what happens from there when you get it?

COSY - The shops would receive the games early, from the distributors, but could not sell them until the release date. Some shops I knew would let the games out early, but only to me. They could then be cracked and distributed and back at the shop before the official release
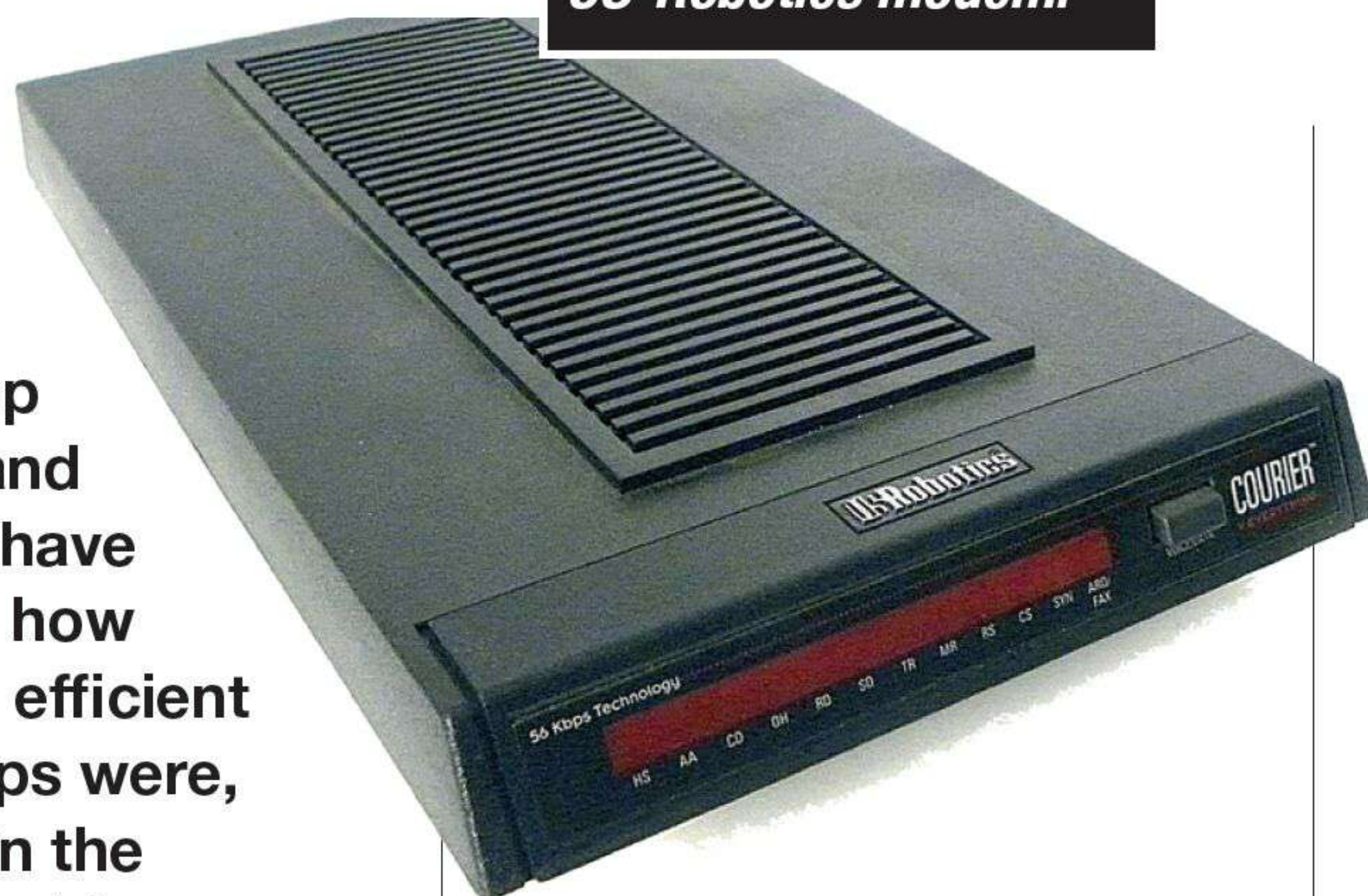
date! I had a program that would DMS the disk as a complete image and 'wrap it up', with protection and everything else included. I'd then upload it to a private node on our own group's BBS, ready for cracking and spreading, often within hours. My mate POD would often do the run to the shops to get the boxed original..

JD - The UK had some of the best crackers in the world, and some groups would often take the piss out of a game's protection (Rob Northern?). Who was the best Amiga cracker in Britain in your opinion and why?

COSY - N.O.M.A.D. was the best, because he did cracks properly, and had no ego. He was also into the same stuff I liked like Pink Floyd, HiFi hardware, he was number one for sure.

JD - A cracking group such, as Nemesis,

Payphone tone-dialer.

Thirty-Three Number
Memory Pocket Tone Dialer

Radio Shack®
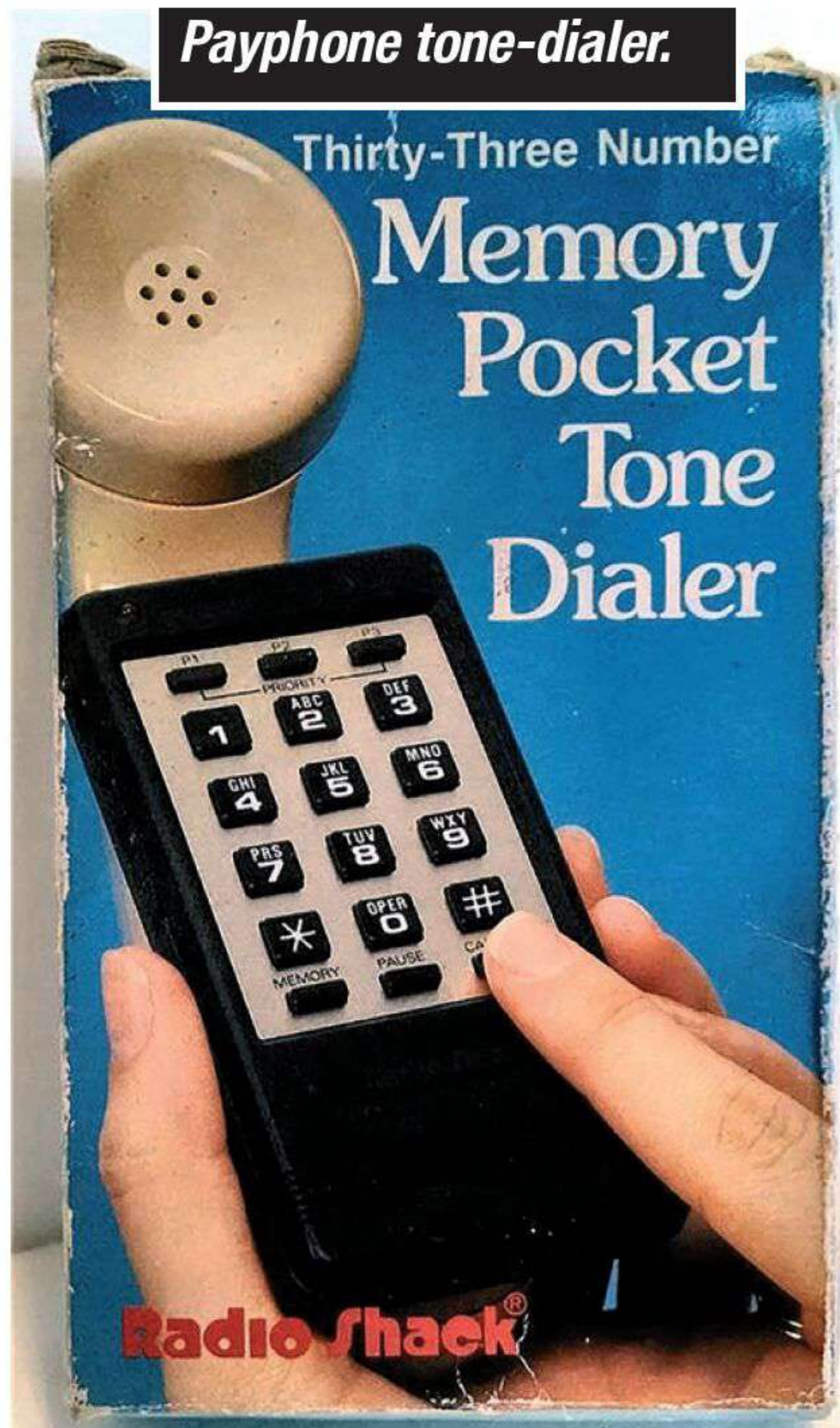
operates like a 'well oiled machine', with everyone having a special role. As well as being an original-supplier you also looked after 'distribution sites' and Nemesis' BBSs, how did you achieve this?

COSY - You have to get the crack "out there" and distribute to as many places as possible, uploading to major boards - sit on the nodes (lines), day in and day out.

JD - Being an active 'scener' in the early 90s could be very expensive if you were a good boy and didn't pull any tricks. International and local calls, downloading and uploading for hours to get originals/releases/cracks where they needed to be before anyone else. What were the hacks and ways to get around such impossible costs?

COSY - Initially there was 'Blueboxing'. I believe people would dial a +00 code or such to a foreign country. Using a PC and software, you would hit the mouse button to send a frequency down a phone, breaking a trunk-line and getting a free dial tone in return. Then there were AT&T calling cards with a PBX number that would let you call outside the USA. The cards would die quickly but there was always someone around to replace it. There were 'tone dialers', readily available in Tandy. These were meant for phoning answering machines from a payphone, but a hack would let you acquire a free call instead. The switch to digital networks put a stop to those.

JD - With unlimited software

passing through your hands every day, how much did you actually keep? Did you just hold onto the newest stuff and then overwrite the disks when they were too old to ship out to contacts?

COSY - No, I kept everything! The only time I would overwrite a game is when a better version of it came out, like a fix for a previously released crack, or a new trainer.

JD - The UK had members from some of the most well-remembered teams such as Paradox, Oracle, Anarchy, Digital, Fairlight, SkidRow, Vision Factory, Quartex, and of course Nemesis. Reading the messages in a crack intro was often as entertaining as the game itself. There were fights breaking out almost every week between rival groups,

often taking the piss for a poorly cracked game, bad code and so on. Did you ever get involved in such squabbles?

COSY - No not really, only with the demoscene maybe. There was a bit of "ours is better than yours" but nothing more than that.

JD - Looking back at the scene almost 35 years later, how does it feel to literally sit in your own gaming museum, to find AMIGA game ROMs on the internet, boot it on the A500 Mini and see yourself credited on screen on a classic crack-intro, such as on Wolfchild from Core Design or 1st Division Manager from Codemasters?

Wolfchild had some COSY treatment back in the day!
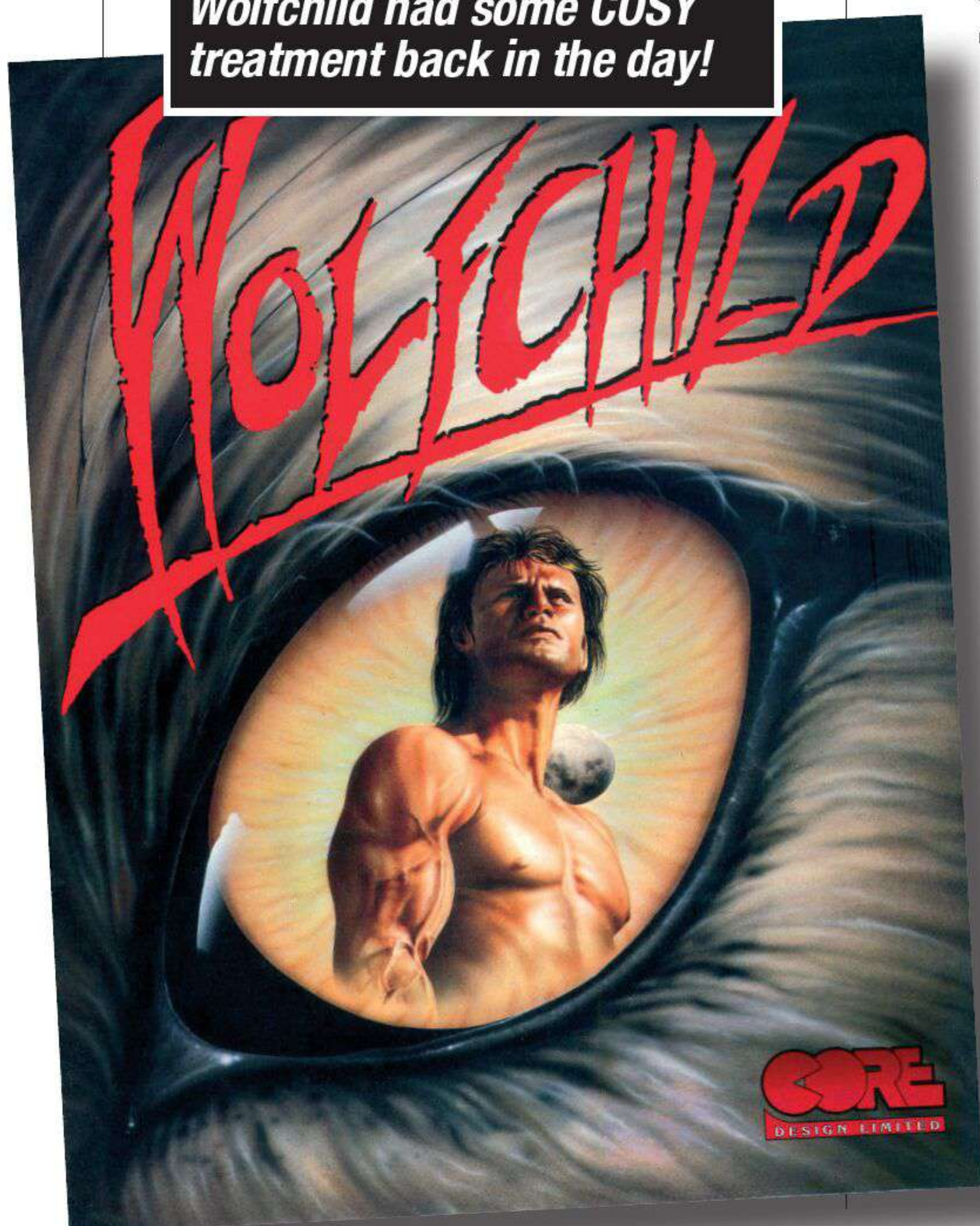
COSY - It feels funny. I can't remember half the stuff - but it feels good. The games were better back then too, these days it's about the GFX and not the game.

JD - Whatever your views on the rights and wrongs of piracy - it happened. Levels of acceptance of piracy may have changed, but regardless of opinion or morals, it would have been a tough wait for one of the legitimate 'services' like the Evercade to essentially sell us ROMs 30 years down the line when the 'scene' literally invented them in the first place. Do you agree, and would you pay £18 for 14 random old C64 games on cart?

COSY - It's wrong and I wouldn't buy it. A waste of money. Been there, done it, and before them. The last time I bought originals was going to Sheffield to 'Just

Scene of the last game purchase from COSY.

Micro' and buying the early C16 and C64 games. We were all kids back then, 2p into Sheffield on the bus. Exciting times.

JD - So COSY, how did you get over the Amiga and get it out of your system when you left it behind? Is there anything you want to get off your chest before we close the book on this thirty year catch-up?

COSY - I got into consoles next. SNES, PS1 running on a 21 inch Sony Trinitron, and also the PC. If there was anything I could get for nothing I was on it. I still feel like a pirate at the end of the day. The companies who don't want you to copy the software but make the blank disks for the purpose - it's crazy. Oh, and the crack intros, "If you enjoy this game then please consider buying the original", which we never ever did!
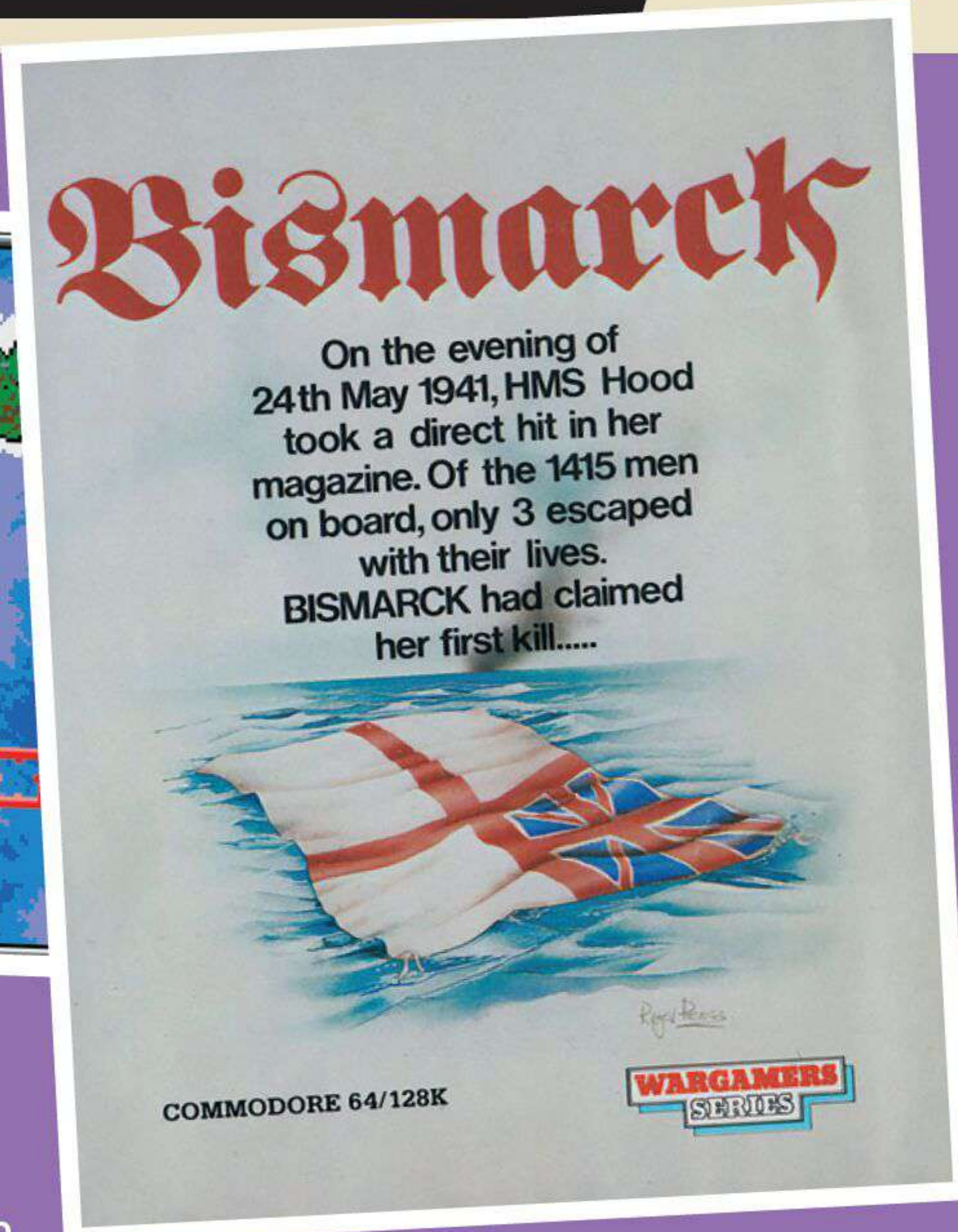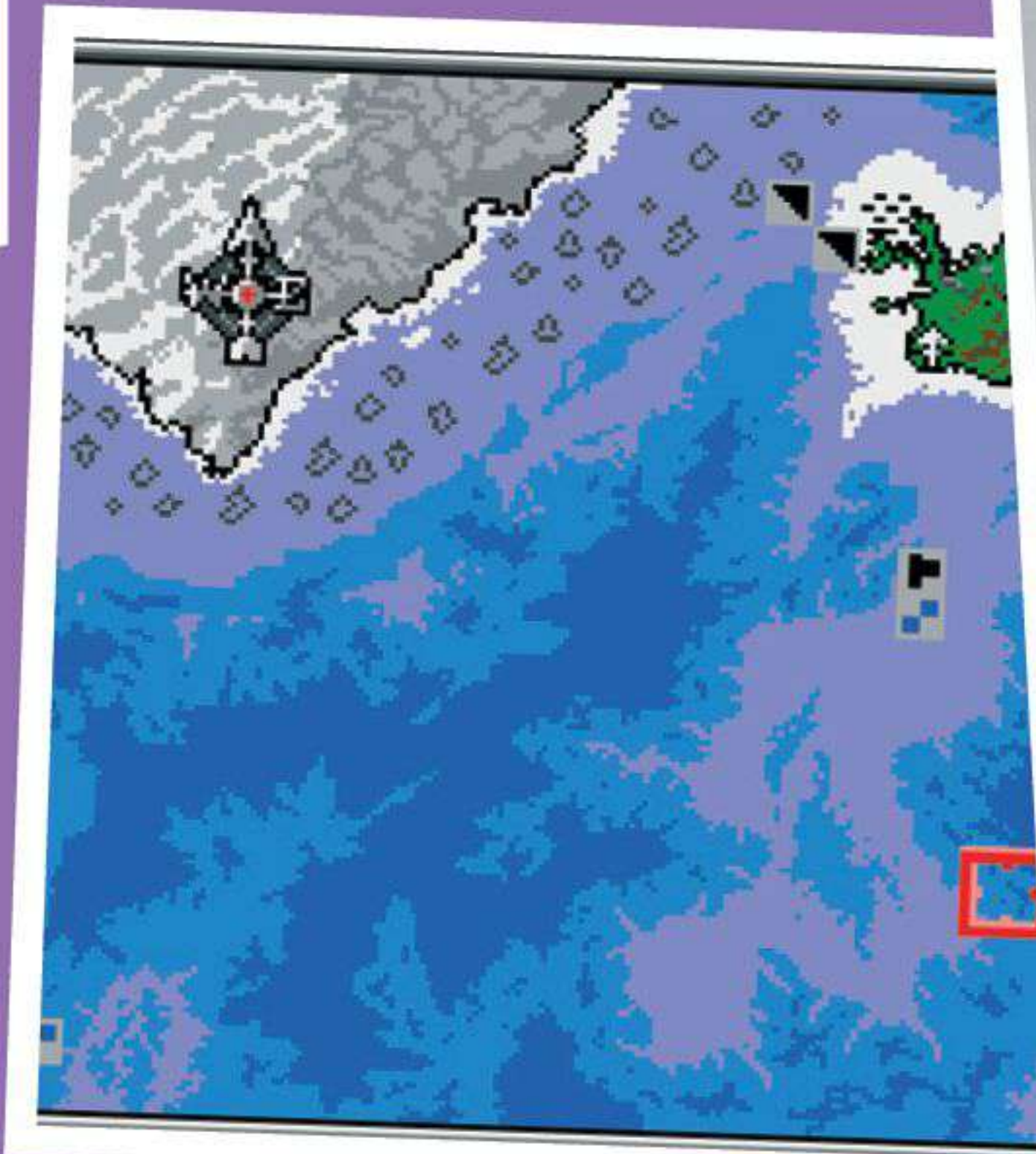
To be continued...

The best game inlay covers of 1988

There's been some stunning artwork gracing the covers of Amiga games over the years from various talented artists and photographers. Graeme Mason looks at some of his favourites, as we travel back once more to 1988.

Bismark
PSS

We kick off this issue's covers with an image that, despite lacking complexity, holds plenty of emotion and power. I love that a bit of history is told here, the brief paragraph evocatively retelling the story of the infamous battleship's first victim. This passage of writing sits under the game's title, aptly designed in a crimson Germanic style, but the image below resonates the most. A remnant of the sunken HMS Hood, a British naval flag, floats on the sea, its folds rippling to the waves' movements beneath it. The sea, calm and serene, does nothing to betray the dramatic events that have just unfolded; however, there in the distance, behind the words, a cloud of billowing smoke rises from the horizon. The artist, Roger Pearse, is credited with a handful of covers. Along with another Amiga game of his, Firezone, I think this is his best work and a classic example of using a different way of portraying a game.

Bismarck

On the evening of 24th May 1941, HMS Hood took a direct hit in her magazine. Of the 1415 men on board, only 3 escaped with their lives. BISMARCK had claimed her first kill.....

COMMODORE 64/128K

WARGAMERS SERIES

F-18 Interceptor
Electronic Arts

There's no such innovation with F-18 Interceptor, a brilliant combat flight simulator from Electronic Arts and Intellisoft. Having said that, it's rare to see a cover where the aircraft is flying right towards the player, and that's one of the aspects I admire about this cover. Subtle elements surround the central image: a missile homes in to the right, while the plane's base, an aircraft carrier, sails below. Then, far in the distance, you can just about make out a large bridge above the right wing. This is likely The Golden Gate Bridge, given San Francisco is the game's setting. Best of all, the artist infuses the picture with a magnificent sense of speed—matching blue and white lines (for both sky and sea) spear outwards from the F-18, giving a very real impression of velocity and excitement.

F/A-18 INTERCEPTOR

AMIGA

ACE 934 RATED

Bob Dinnerman

NUMBER ONE IN THE USA

ELECTRONIC ARTS
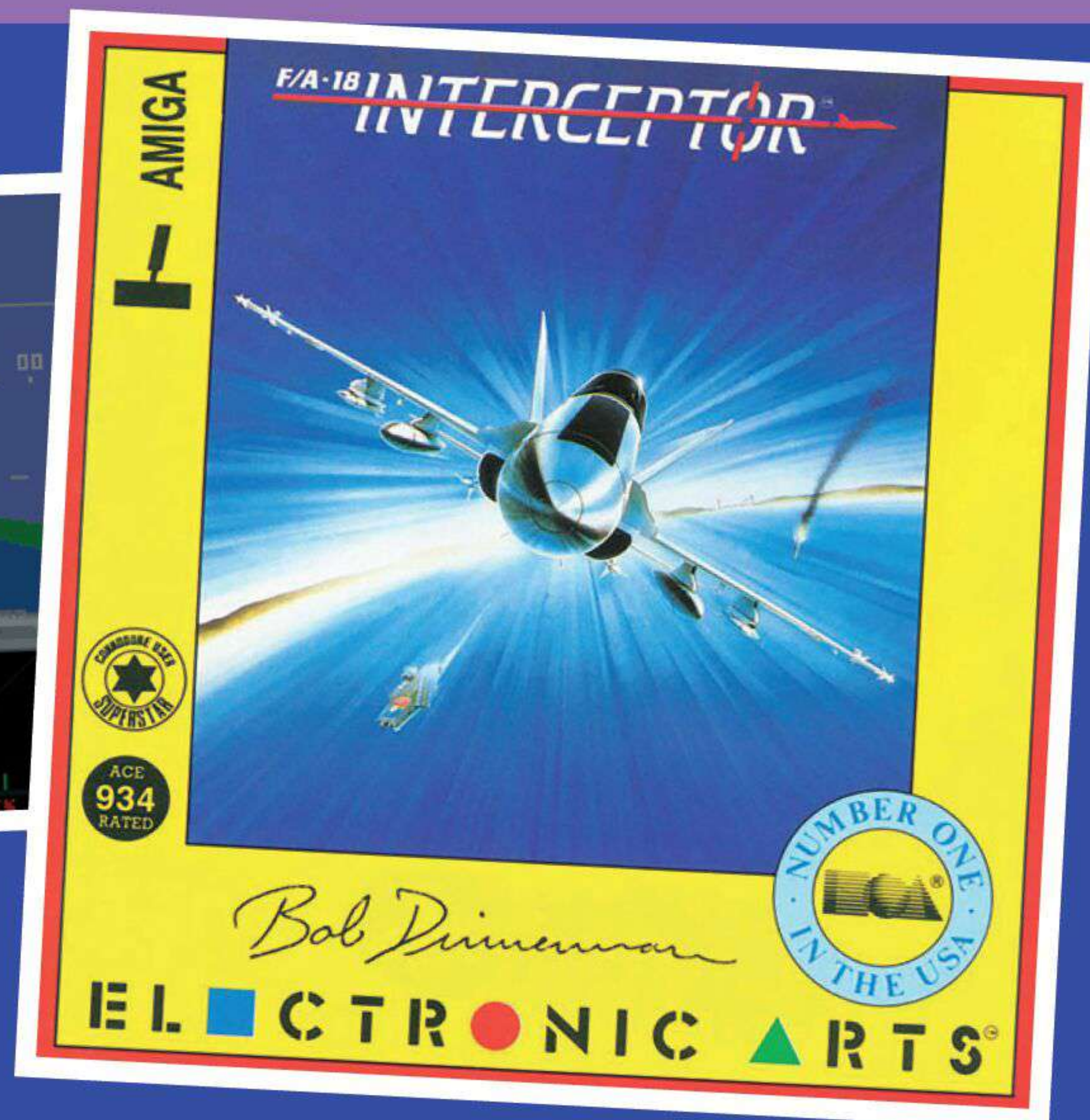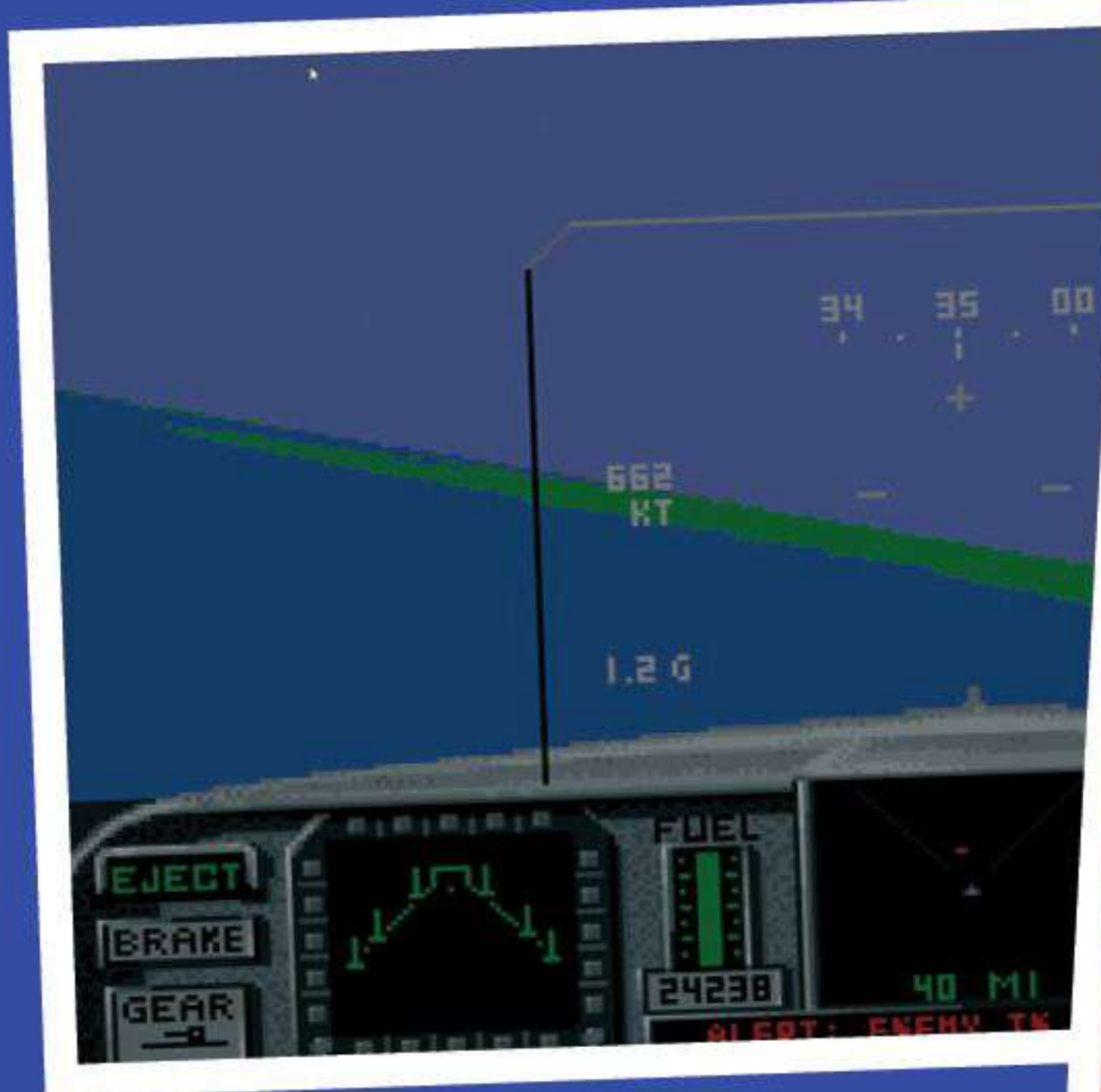
Manhunter New York
Sierra

Time for a radical departure – as this cover puts it – as we shift to the point 'n' click genre and Sierra's Manhunter series. There's a real post-apocalyptic vibe here, with the stricken Statue Of Liberty leaning to the right (minus hand and flame) as the city rises mid-image. The desolate mood is reflected in the ruined wall, which we are essentially 'looking over', but it's that brilliantly-rendered figure at the top of the picture that I admire the most. Is this the player character, charged by the villainous occupiers of Earth, The Orb Alliance, to hunt down human transgressors? Wrinkled through time and the stress of the job, this manhunter looks like he's carefully studying his prey while musing on the conspiracy he is slowly uncovering. Dark and brooding, much like the game itself, which inspired a sequel set in San Francisco.
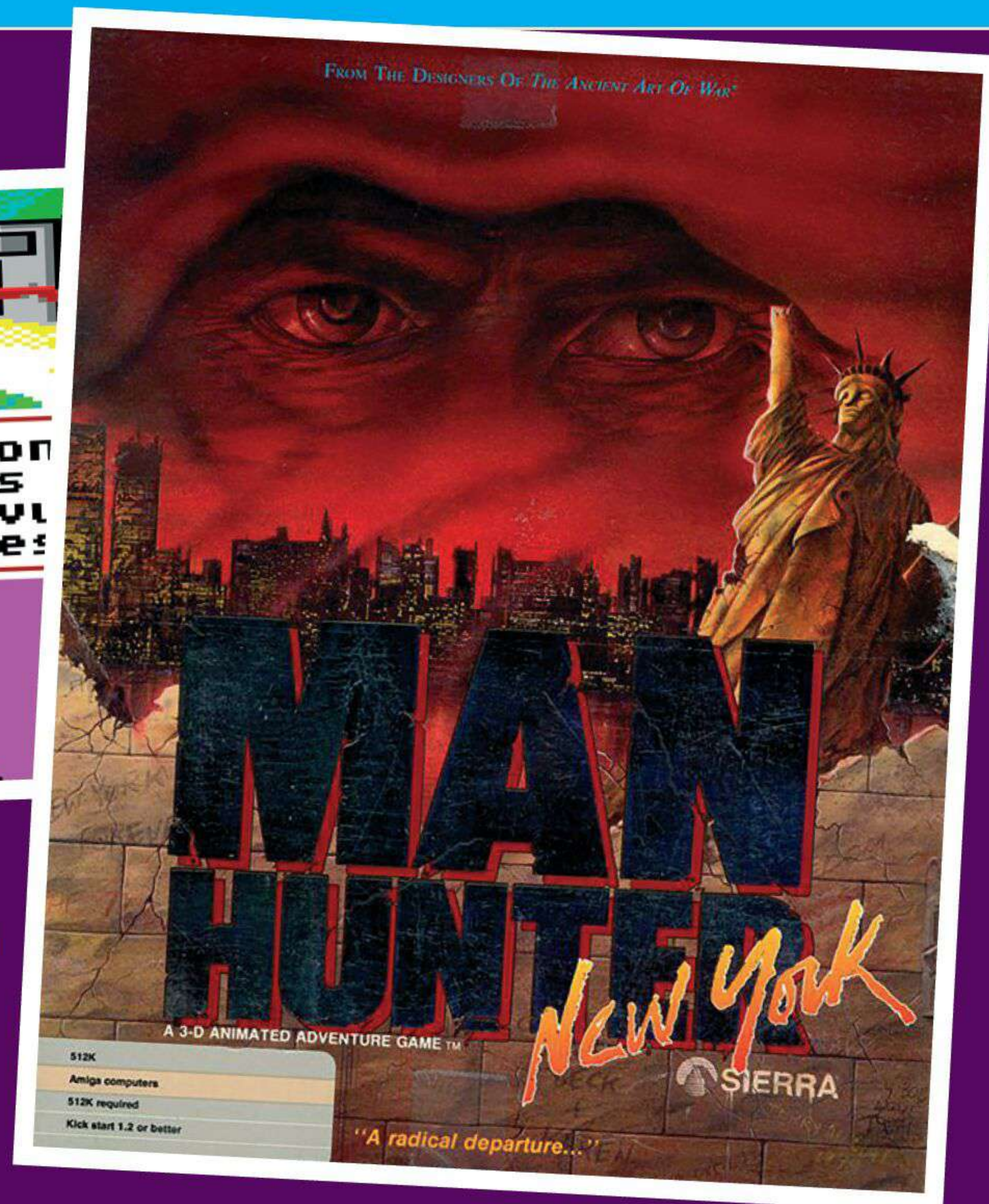
Times of Lore
Origin

We couldn't let this issue slip without an RPG or strategy game cover, could we? Last issue was Roadwar Europa – this month, I've selected a more traditional cover from Origin's Ultima-inspired Times Of Lore. Actually, this is more action RPG than conventional dungeon crawler, but the cover is an exemplary depiction of a muscled warrior ready to face his ultimate battle. The barbarian is emerging from a dingy castle, and before him is a scene of bucolic calm. Vast green fields and a forest, bulging round and white clouds and snow-capped mountains form the basis of a very natural view. But you just know there will be all manner of violent beasties waiting in this world, especially inside that angular castle to the left of the landscape. That's probably why this brave fighter has his axe at the ready.
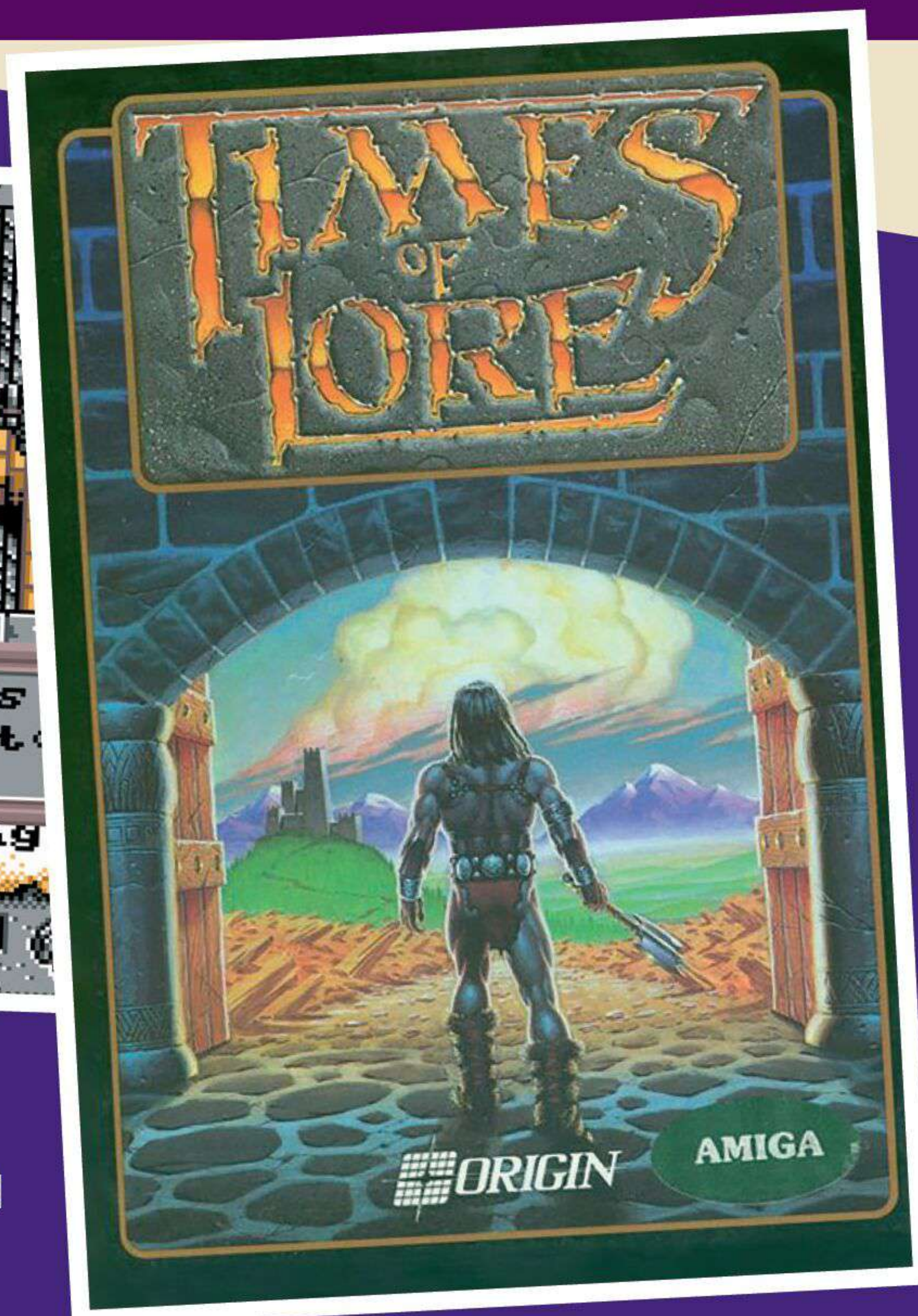
Tanglewood
Microdeal

Tanglewood (which, as far as I can tell, is unrelated to the recent indie release) is a charming futuristic RPG based on a Dragon 32 original by Timothy Purves and Pete Lyon. The player's Uncle Arthur has lost the mining rights to his planet, and the dastardly company he bought them from are now reclaiming the region from your absent-minded relative. There's nothing to it but to venture into the world of Tanglewood, locate your uncle's missing papers, and prove that he owns the rights to mine the valuable Dog Crystals and Ice Emeralds. Tanglewood's cover reminds me of early Genesis album covers, and it has one defining feature, the beautiful and intricate way the tree branches form the letters of the game. There's a wistful and peaceful look to the rest of the image, even though that path up to the castle would send a health and safety officer's OCD into overdrive.
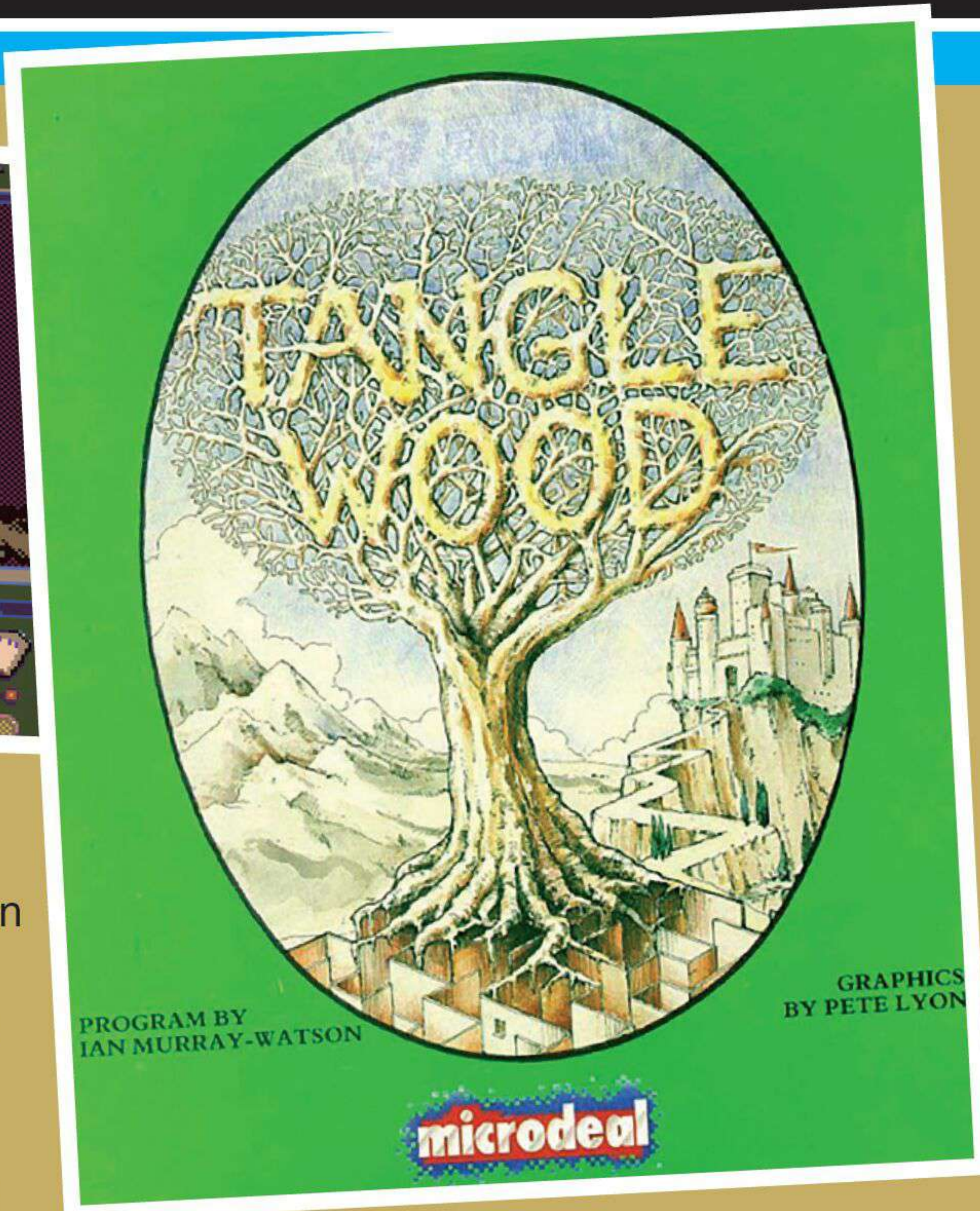
Zak McKracken And The Alien Mindbenders
Lucasfilm Games

Infocom tended to Finally, we have this famous point 'n' click adventure from Lucasfilm Games. Zak McKracken is a humourous adventure set just under ten years into the future – 1997! Earth is under threat from the devious Caponians, who are using a low-frequency signal over phone lines to reduce the intelligence of the human race. Fortunately, another alien race, the Skolarians, has left a device capable of repulsing the Caponians on Earth [that is fortunate – Ed], only the bits are spread all over the planet and beyond. The cover looks like a random collection of items to the casual viewer – but actually, the goldfish (Zak's pet, Sushi), two-headed squirrel, loaf of bread, Groucho Marx disguise and an anthropomorphic broom all form part of the game and make for a delightfully haphazard cover. As an early point 'n' clicker, Zak McKracken has plenty of tremendous offbeat humour, which its cover perfectly replicates.